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BEHIND THE SCENES
IN THE TRANSVAAL

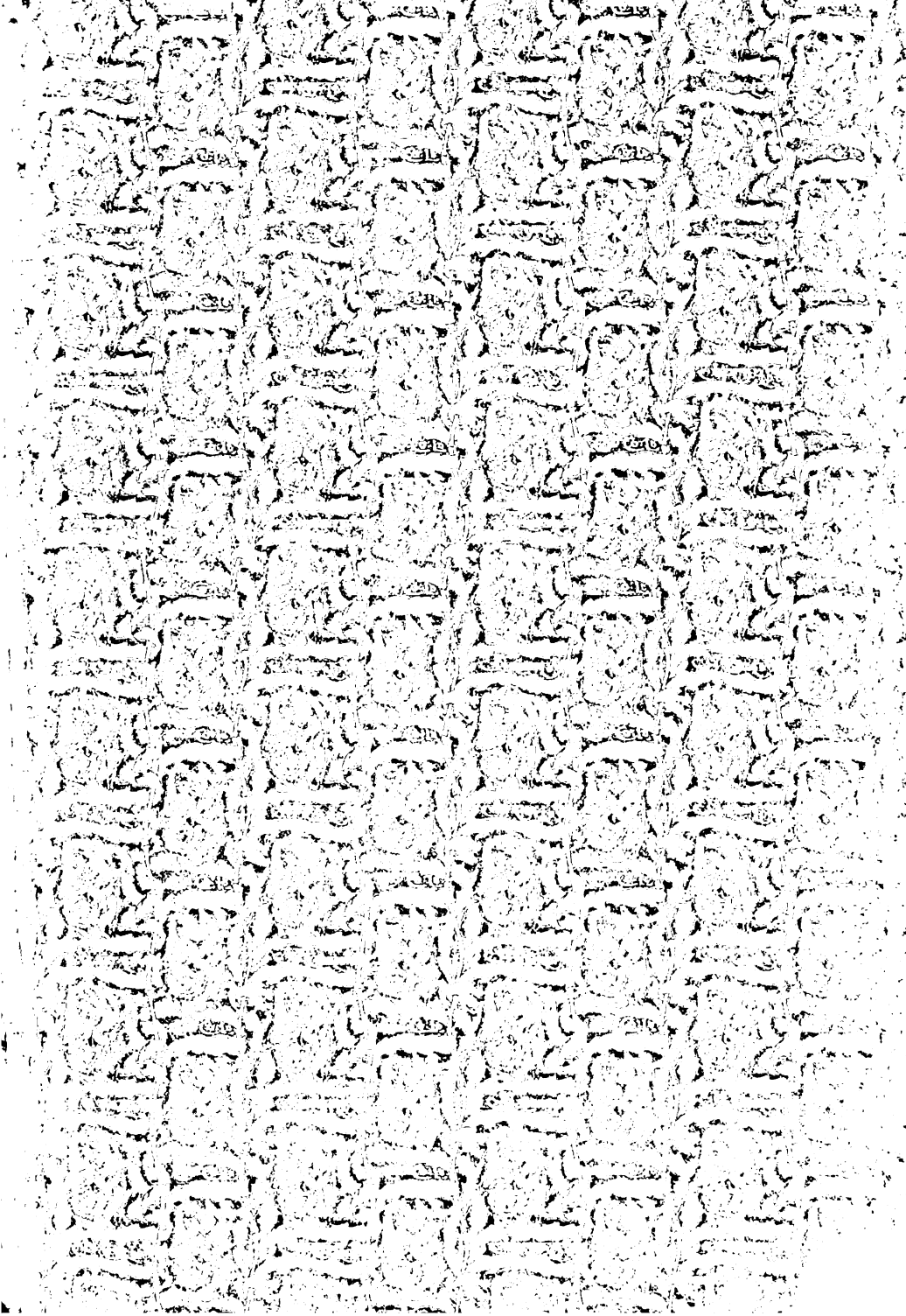
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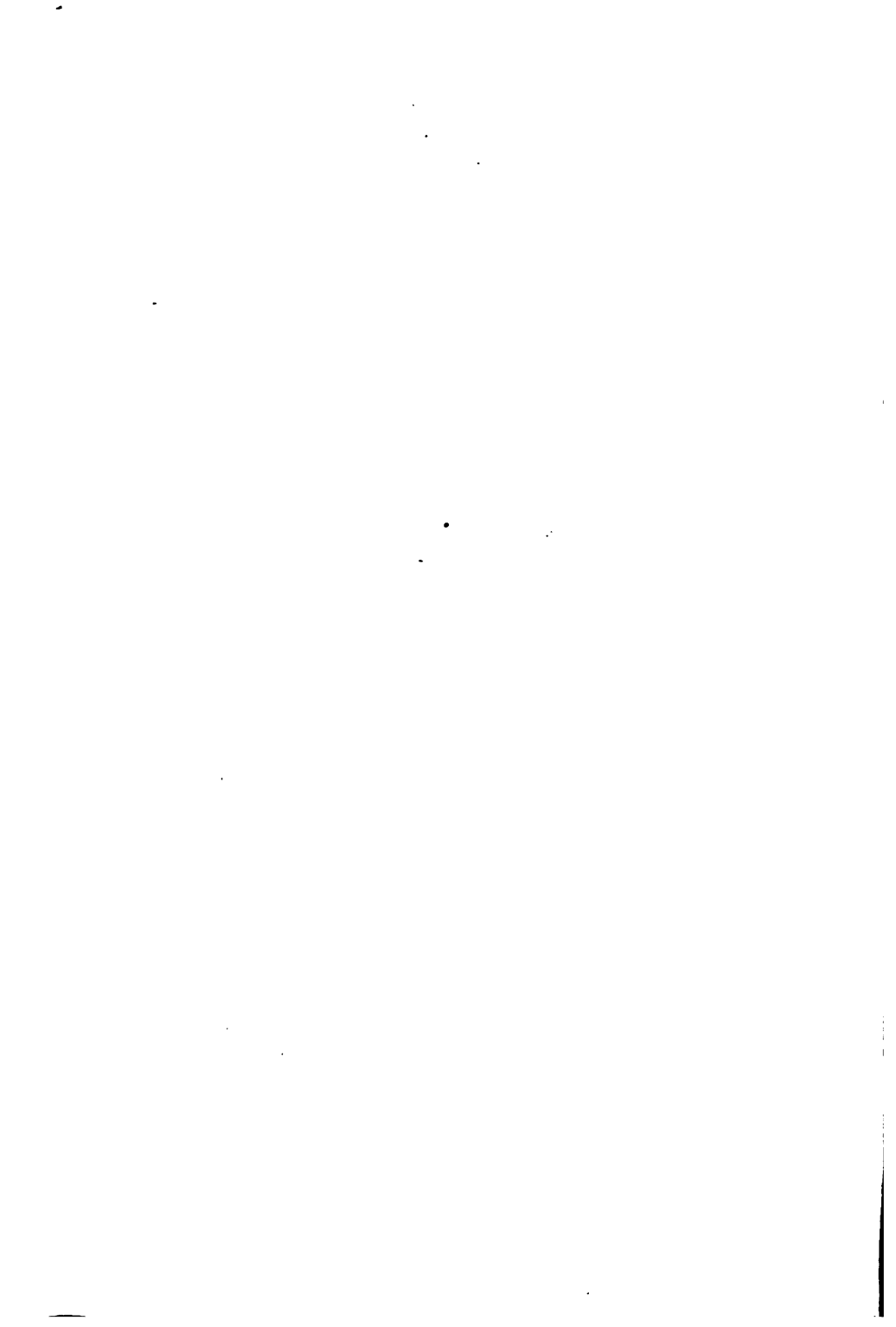
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BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TRANSVAAL

BY

DAVID MACKAY WILSON
"

"RING OUT A SLOWLY DYING CAUSE,
AND ANCIENT FORMS OF PARTY STRIFE:
RING IN THE NOBLER MODES OF LIFE,
WITH SWEETER MANNERS, PURER LAWS."

Tennyson



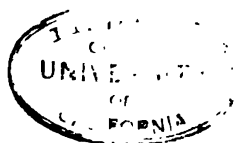
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P R E F A C E.

IF the reasons that have induced me to add to the large number of volumes on the Transvaal were demanded, I should without hesitation or diffidence give them as follow: First, because I am the only Transvaal official who has ventured to enlighten the public on certain phases of the history of the country; secondly, because I sincerely believe that much that I have to tell may have practical value.

In reading other works devoted to South African matters, I have always been conscious that the writers, however competent from a literary point of view, have rarely possessed that personal knowledge of their subject that alone can justify one in writing as an authority. Further, these writers have generally been partisans, who, in their eager advocacy of their particular side, have either wittingly or unwittingly handled their subject in a manner that has given just cause for accepting their facts and deductions with caution. As an English Colonial, born in South Africa, and practically the first

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Gold Commissioner of the first goldfields in the Transvaal, and father of the Gold Law of the country, I feel entitled to speak on matters that come within the scope of the principal industry of the Witwatersrand, while my long connection with the inner affairs of the Transvaal as a Government representative has afforded me ample opportunities for adding to the notebooks that from very early habit have been my lifelong companions. The leisure placed at my disposal by my expulsion from the Transvaal with other non-burghers has given me what a busy life has hitherto denied — an opportunity to place on more lasting record some of the results of my seventeen years' close relationship with Inner Pretoria.

My official connection with the Government and consideration for certain individuals must in some instances have the effect of closing my mouth on matters of which I should much like to speak; at the same time the changed condition of matters political has, I consider, released me from any obligation to secrecy in numerous cases, for there can now be no hurt or prejudice to the persons implicated. I have for this reason not hesitated to mention names where necessary to the story. Those who know the Transvaal intimately are well aware that the Boer is by no

means susceptible to criticism that does not prejudice him in the eyes of his employers—the executive. Indeed, it is safe to assert that no public man in the Transvaal ever yet suffered loss of prestige in the eyes of his own people by being accused of dishonesty, so long as the imputation carried with it a suggestion of smartness and expert trickery, generically described as “slimness.” I make this explanation, not by way of justification for any reflections on persons of position, but in order to satisfy any censorious English reader that I am not outraging the canons of good taste as they exist in the Transvaal by telling certain stories of a personal character.

The temptation to deal with some of the many matters I have seen mishandled by other authors has been very great ; but I have resisted it, rigorously confining my records or criticisms to matters with which I have been in immediate personal contact. I have been most careful, in collecting any evidence I may have used, to distinguish between hearsay and direct knowledge, and I have introduced no matter of which I cannot speak with absolute authority. I have in my possession ample documentary evidence for all my principal statements, and much more.

I have made no attempt to observe strict chronological order or due sequence of events, merely stringing together such incidents as I think will best illustrate the points I wish to emphasise, and convey some idea of the gradual development of the Transvaal official from the poverty-stricken individual I found him to his days of arrogant opulence. My main and objective point has been to depict the oligarchic character of the Transvaal Government, and show that it has always been a synonym for the business firm of Kruger & Co., Limited ; limited in the number of the favoured members who formed the company, unlimited in the extent of its field of operations.

D. M. W.

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BEHIND THE SCENES IN THE TRANSVAAL.

CHAPTER I.

Colonial ignorance of the Transvaal in its early days—Rev. van den Lingen foretells the future greatness of the Transvaal—A famous Dutch Predikant—A Transvaaler visits the Colony—The Boers' first sight of a railway train—The navy the first "imported" Englishman—Prejudice against English in Cape Colony.

It has often been made a reproach and jest against the English Government that it knew nothing of the Transvaal at the time it first interfered actively in its affairs. Even to-day this supposed ignorance is occasionally used as an argument by writers and speakers. I never meet it without recalling the mental attitude entertained towards that northern district by the people of Cape Colony at the period when and where I first began to feel something like an interest in the far-away Republic. To us the Transvaal was a vague "somewhere north," an indefinite spot to which people we had known in childhood were said to have trekked, and whence came, at remote intervals, rumours and even messages from the long-absent ones, who had settled down in that land so far beyond. I remember well that the general feeling towards these people was one some-

thing akin to pity, for the most satisfactory reports never pictured the land as one flowing with milk and honey. Not without reason, as after knowledge proved, we were accustomed to look upon the Transvaal Boer as a romantic sort of exile, working out his fate amid surroundings of the hardest. A close relation of my own had trekked across the Vaal in 1868, and a letter from him about once a year gave us the impression that, although he had married the daughter of a mighty hunter, and had settled down into prosperity, he was not in any way to be envied, and his reports never had the effect of inspiring the many to whom these rare epistles were passed with any desire to leave the fruitful Cape for the doubtful North. It is true that among a limited few in the district of the Paarl there was a latent faith in possibilities and the brilliant future of the Transvaal. These ideas were the fruit of the seed implanted in the early sixties by perhaps the most remarkable and influential minister of religion the Dutch Reformed Church has produced in South Africa. The Rev. G. W. van den Lingen was Predikant of the D. R. Church at the Paarl. He had come out as a young clergyman straight from Holland, and remained in his first charge till his death at the age of 75. Goldsmith's description of the village preacher of Sweet Auburn fitted, in spirit, van den Lingen. Not only was he a man "to all the country dear," but he exercised a moral, personal and intellectual influence that

would be difficult to describe. No greater evidence of his personal control over his people can be cited than the well-known fact that when the Cape Railway began running Sunday trains the Predikant promptly vetoed them. Not only did he preach, but he acted. In order to enforce his hostility and bring the Company to terms, he put on a service of 'buses and waggons to compete against the weekly traffic of the line in his district, and with such effect that the Company were forced to surrender and abandon the obnoxious Sunday service.

The Predikant was the accepted educational force of the Colony, for in those days the Paarl was the centre of Afrikanderdom, and stood in the same relation to the rest of the Colony as Boston is supposed to stand in to the other cities of the United States. In the course of a series of sermons preached in the decade preceding the annexation of the Transvaal by England, the Rev. van den Lingen saw with prophetic eye, and foretold, with the eloquence of which he was a master, the future importance of the Transvaal. He predicted the troubles in store, and generally outlined the future with such amazing accuracy that to this day there are, among the survivors of his congregation, those who implicitly believe that he spoke as one inspired. I was too young at the time to retain more than a shadowy impression to the effect that the Predikant knew of all the wonderful things that were to occur twenty years later ; but in after years I have often

talked over the subject with those who had heard his prophecies, and who regarded the developments that occurred quite as a matter of course, and in the light of something of which they had received due notice. I have frequently tried to find out what data the reverend gentleman possessed on which he built his theories, but without success. He predicted the discovery of diamonds, and of copper in Namaqualand, but so far as I have been able to ascertain his general knowledge on these subjects must have been of the most meagre description, and the natural inference is that he was a man of acute observation and power of deducing facts from the scantiest material. His family have followed in his footsteps, both sons and daughters being to-day among the best educated and most intellectual of Afrikaners.

One of the most earnest opponents of the union between the Free State and the Transvaal was the Rev. Ardt van den Lingen, Predikant of the Dutch Reformed Church at Harrismith, and a son of the pastor of the Paarl. At the time that war between Great Britain and the Transvaal was on the verge of commencement Mr. van den Lingen issued an appeal to his fellow Free Staters, which was one of the ablest expressions of loyalty to England and the folly of the proposed action of the Free State that had been made. Now that every word has been justified, Mr. van den Lingen's influence with the Free State Boers must very largely increase.

I well recollect also that a trader from our district used to journey to Bechuanaland, making his extreme point the town since known to fame as Mafeking. This place was looked upon as the Never Never country, and on the two or three occasions that I said goodbye to this trader it was with the settled conviction that we should never see him again. Stories of Gordon Cumming, the lion hunter, were general in those days, and though he never got farther north than this same Mafeking he was regarded as a marvellously intrepid explorer. I also well recollect the Rev. Dr. Moffat, father-in-law of Dr. Livingstone, visiting the Paarl. He was accorded an enthusiastic reception, and his stories of the region bordering on the Transvaal were listened to as genuinely wonderful.

It was not until the year 1875 that my interest in the Transvaal was aroused to anything tangible. At that time I was station-master at Durban Road, twelve miles from Capetown. Such a position was in those days one of considerable importance, at any rate in the estimation of Colonials, though I fear I shall not be able to impress the English reader with a due sense of the weight and responsibility attaching to the office. I was then 23 years of age, having been promoted rather quickly, and I sincerely hope that I bore my honours with befitting humility. One advantage among many that the position gave me was the opportunity of coming in contact with travellers and men of

the world, which doubtless did much, though perhaps unconsciously, to enlarge my ambitions, and helped to eradicate, or at least tone down, that excusable vanity of the Colonial which tends to make him take a rather exaggerated view of the place and importance of his native land in the universe. I had many a chat with men who were then powers in the land, or have since become so, and I have a lively and pleasant recollection of many an amusing incident, bringing out phases of character not usually enlarged upon in laudatory biographies. A story of the late Sir Christopher Brand, Speaker of the Cape Parliament and father of the able and patriotic Sir John, President of the Orange Free State, occurs to me. It illustrates a weakness for which the old gentleman had a wide reputation. Some years before my promotion I was clerk in the telegraph department at the Paarl. Early one morning Sir Christopher came to the station to send a wire, ordering the arrest of a man who was subsequently hanged for an atrocious wife murder. I counted the words and announced that the cost of the message would be four and six. Sir Christopher told me that he had no money on him, but would pay me later. The office regulation as to prepayment was inflexible, and was not to be relaxed even to oblige the Speaker of the Parliament. I told him so, whereupon he used his persuasive eloquence upon me to such effect that I weakly consented to pay for the message out of my own

slender salary. It was duly sent, and the murderer arrested. I saw no more of Sir Christopher for a month or two, when I met him and reminded him of his debt. My salary at that time was £2 per month, so that four and sixpence was an amount of some consideration to me. He told me that he had no money with him, but assured me that the liability would be discharged at an early date. Several times I pressed my claim, but always without result.

Four years afterwards, when I was station-master at Durban Road, I was one day called by a gentleman to open the door of one of the carriages, which were always kept locked in those days. I immediately recognised Sir Christopher, and in a spirit half jocular, half serious, reminded him of his debt. He impatiently dismissed the subject, and demanded to be released, as it was imperative that he should see someone on the platform. I told him that I would not open the door until I received my four and sixpence. At this moment the train was moved on for shunting purposes, and the old knight remained gesticulating and threatening at the window. On the train returning to the platform I approached the carriage and repeated my demand, when my peppery debtor consigned me to perdition, adding that he did not now require to get out, as it was too late. I never got my four and six, but I forgave him the debt, feeling satisfied that I had got even with him.

A member of the family was nearly the cause of a catastrophe to me later on. Sir John Brand and his suite were passing in a special train to Capetown on his memorable visit to England. The regulations required that on such occasions the station-master should himself hold the lever controlling the points. I had just taken my position when, looking in the direction of the fast approaching train, I saw to my horror my eighteen months old child sitting on the line, playing with a piece of paper. In a moment I solved the question—child or President?—and rushed to the rescue. The train passed the points safely, and few but myself knew the horror that had been so narrowly escaped. The traffic manager, however, who accompanied the train, noticed that the points were unattended, and a few hours later I was formally suspended by a telegraphic message. An inquiry was duly held, at which I pleaded guilty, stated the facts of the case, and asked the chairman what he would have done under the circumstances. "I should have done as you did," was the frank reply, and I was acquitted and reinstated.

Among the arrivals at Durban Road one day in 1875 was an elderly man of rugged appearance, in whom I recognised by certain signs one who is known throughout the Colony as a *Blikoor*, that is, a convert to the Dopper church, of which I shall have much to say in the course of my narrative. With the communicativeness that is a characteristic of the Boer when he meets

a stranger who speaks his own language fluently, as I did, he told me his name was Jacob Maré, that he was a Colonial by birth, but had been living in the Transvaal since childhood, and that this was his first journey south, whither he had come to look for a wife, who would be his fourth. Being the first Transvaaler I had met, I was unusually interested in the old man, and did what I could to assist him; I introduced him to a family from which he eventually chose a wife, and during his stay of about two months in the neighbourhood we became very friendly. From him I heard my first definite account of the Transvaal, and received the first sample of genuine Transvaal tobacco, which was as superior to the Cape product as real Mocha coffee is to the imitation article. He was a wealthy man—that is, wealthy according to the modest standard of that day—and the possessor of a farm at Heidelberg, which subsequently proved to be gold-bearing. He gave me an entirely different impression of the country from that which I had previously entertained, and inflamed my ambition to become a sharer in the free and easy life of the prosperous Transvaalers. When I bade him good-bye the old man gave expression to his faith that the day would come when he would meet me in the Transvaal, a hope the fulfilment of which I saw little prospect of at that time.

There were, of course, very many odd and amusing incidents constantly occurring in con-

nection with the line that occasioned more than a passing joke; but unfortunately there is a remarkable similarity between too many railway stories to justify their narration at any length. This is particularly true of the anecdotes based on the innocence of the traveller new to the railway. There is, for example, the simple-minded Boer who, being purposely flurried and hurried to catch the train on his first visit to a railway station, threw his baggage through the ticket window, and tried to climb in after it; but I believe this innocent is not unknown at other stations. I have many a time had to order off a party of farmers who, in their curiosity to examine the locomotive, had crawled beneath it, and much of my time was often occupied in answering questions, and clearing up obscure points for the benefit of farmers, whose acquaintance with railways had hitherto been confined to the reports of neighbours.

Many of the stories one meets with, supposed to illustrate Boer ignorance and prejudice in the matter of the introduction of the iron road, are either altogether apocryphal or merely *réchauffés* of old stories told in England under similar circumstances fifty or sixty years ago. The farmer was quite prepared for the railway, and displayed very little surprise or, in some cases, even interest, in the great revolutioniser. In this connection it may be new to many, and help to explain some of the prejudice against Englishmen existing in parts of the Colony, to mention that

the first "imported" specimen of Englishman seen by very many of the farmers was the navvy, who was brought out in large numbers for the construction of the first railways in the country. This gentleman left none of his characteristics at home, but transported them all to South Africa, where he soon became a synonym for all that was rowdy, brutal, and drunken. Stories of his violence and general ill-treatment of the Afrikanders lost nothing in the telling, and it is not surprising that the name "navvy" became a word of menace and terror. I have a vivid recollection of hearing, as a child, that a navvy had been seen in our neighbourhood, and the fear and emotion provoked made a great impression upon me. I well remember that numbers of children, and even adults, went out to inspect a footprint, which popular rumour ascribed to the boot of one of these dreaded navvies, and for days afterwards we were careful not to wander far afield.

Later, one of the fraternity threw a glass of water over my mother, and with his mate received a sound thrashing from my father. This circumstance elevated our family very considerably in the eyes of our Dutch neighbours, who looked upon English people as incapable of defending themselves. It does not appear to be a matter of general knowledge that the race feeling and prejudice against the English we hear so much of in connection with the Transvaal was equally strong in the Colony in my childhood. I well

remember we were shunned by the Dutch children of our own age and class because we were English ; and in many ways no pains were spared by our neighbours to show that they regarded English people as very much their inferiors as well as their enemies.

When the railway was extended to Beaufort West I was promoted to its station-mastership, which position I held until my resignation two years later. The line had by this time passed into possession of the Government, and for various reasons my post had ceased to hold the charm for me it had in the earlier days. My duties became naturally more onerous as the traffic increased, and I was not altogether sorry when an opportunity occurred that enabled me to quit the service with credit. The meanness of the Government had on many occasions raised my indignation, and I consider that the incident which clinched my half-made resolution to leave the service was an act of contemptible shabbiness. An old slave woman in the district was informed that her late mistress had died at Capetown, bequeathing her a small sum of money and the handsome old-fashioned pier glass before which she had so often superintended her mistress's toilette. The old lady journeyed to the capital, and on her return with her treasured legacy found, to her anguish, that through the carelessness of the railway employés the mirror had been smashed to atoms. The distress of the poor creature induced me to make special efforts to secure

compensation. I represented the case as one of peculiar hardship, and received an official acknowledgment asking if the woman could afford to fight the case in the Courts. I explained that she was very poor, upon which I was curtly informed that no compensation would be granted. Soon afterwards I resigned my position and prepared to trek to the Land of Promise—the Transvaal.

CHAPTER II.

The trek to the Transvaal—First sight of Transvaal Boers—Boer yarns—Poverty of the Country—The President in England—The 1884 Convention—Paul Kruger's cork trick—Sir Bartle Frere at Wonderfontein—Why England has not annexed the moon—Sleeping 35 in a room—Pretoria in 1883—Appointed Landdrost—Story of the Geldenhuis Gold Mine—The sacred cock.

SINCE the far-away day when old Jacob Maré prophesied that I would trek to the Transvaal that country had been annexed by Great Britain, and retroceded. Majuba had been fought nearly two years when I loaded up a waggon with all my worldly possessions and, accompanied by my wife and four children, began a twelve days' trek from Victoria West, Cape Colony, to Kimberley, then the most direct route to Ventersdorp, the headquarters of the pioneer relation on whose good offices I relied for a helping hand to begin life in a new land. Of the journey little need be said. It was like all such expeditions in those days. We toiled slowly and wearily over the tracks that passed for roads, sometimes making long pauses to help the mules extricate the waggon from the rocky bottom or marsh, often having to carry my youngest child for miles to save the painful jolting and rolling of the vehicle. The cold at night was intense, and I frequently broke off huge icicles that had formed inside the canvas of the sleeping tent. At Kimberley, then in the

full flush of its prosperity, I obtained a spring waggon—a much more comfortable means of conveyance; and in six days reached Ventersdorp, a small village in the Potchefstroom district of the Transvaal. The place consisted of about a dozen mud houses, a general store and canteen, and the flour mills erected and carried on by my relative. His business consisted principally in grinding the mealies (maize) brought by the farmers from the Rustenburg district, *en route* for Kimberley, then the principal market for all Transvaal produce. The business was a profitable one, as the charge for grinding a sack of mealies was half-a-crown, or if, as often happened, payment was made in kind, one sack in ten was the fee.

It was here that I made my acquaintance with the Transvaal Boers, who were as strange and interesting to me as I was to them. The cleanliness and civilised dress of my children were a source of wonderment, especially to the wives of the Transvaal farmers. For my part I was equally impressed by the uncouth ruggedness of the farmers—so different from those among whom my life had been spent. One of the striking features of Boer character, to which I was soon introduced, is the fantastic propensity for telling preposterous and in many instances blasphemous stories in all seriousness. At first I was inclined to believe that they were told for my special benefit and merely by way of impressing or pulling the leg of a new-comer; but, later, I

discovered that there was no such intention, that as a matter of fact the average Boer does not indulge in this form of chaff with strangers. The stories were told in perfect good faith, and mainly believed by the auditors. These narrations generally took place round the fire at night near the outspanned waggon. Each man contributed his story, one being ready the moment the other was finished.

One of the most successful and daring of these story-tellers was Kerstein, recently member of the Second Raad for Rustenburg. He had a yarn of an extraordinary trek of snakes which he declared he had seen travelling towards Kimberley. He described the procession as many yards in width and a mile or so in length. Someone was curious to know how the little snakes kept pace with the bigger ones, when Kerstein solemnly explained that they lay longitudinally across the bodies of the adults. Similar stories were told with an earnestness impressive enough to satisfy a listener that the narrator at least believed them. I call to mind a story frequently told by one De Beer. He declared that up to his 32nd year he had never been able to read a book or write, but that one day, while minding his sheep, two angel-like personages, whose radiant appearance he described in great detail, appeared to him from the clouds, one of them bearing a book which De Beer recognised as a Bible. The angel opened the book and commanded him to read, which he did forthwith, the passage being the 42nd Psalm.

The visitor next made characters on the ground and bade him write. In this he was also successful. "Ever since then," said De Beer, "I have been able both to read and write." De Beer, by the way, was an Elder of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Equally far-fetched stories told in the Raad have been neither scoffed at nor discredited, or, if they were, no religious Burgher dare say so. It was Kerstein, the Raad member, who gave me my first example of Boer "slimness." While his corn was being ground, dough was noticed oozing from between the millstones. Examination showed that in order to increase the weight of his flour and defraud the miller and purchaser, he had added water, but had miscalculated the quantity and overdone it. The discovery of his mean attempt at fraud in no way disconcerted him.

The wife of my relative had been herself a great huntress—great in both senses of the word, for she was six feet in height. She was born on the farm where the town of Pietermaritzburg now stands, and had shot lions, elephants, and other big game by the score. Among other trophies that had fallen to her rifle was that rare and much discussed creature known to the Boers as a water monkey—an animal said to have all the external appearance and habits of a monkey *plus* webbed feet, and the power of swimming and remaining a long time submerged. The skin was sold or bartered to a Kaffir chief for six oxen for use on the royal throne. I have never met

an animal of the water monkey species, but I have been assured by old farmers that it was frequently seen by them in the early days in the northern parts of the Transvaal.

I spent some time getting the lay of the country, making acquaintances, and generally preparing to acquire something approaching that ease and independence which had been the bait that had lured me from the comfort and comparative opulence of the old Colony. So far I had not been favourably impressed. The country was in a state of squalid poverty, and even the prosperous farmers led lives of hardship that were utterly unknown in the land I had left behind. Money was very scarce, so rare in fact that for several years afterwards it was no unusual thing to meet people who had never seen it. So recently as 1896 I gave a shilling for some slight service to an intelligent lad of twelve or fourteen residing on a farm in the Koomati district. He asked me if it was money. He showed it to his mother, who, after examining it, expressed her delight, assuring me that it was a very long time since she had seen a coin. Yet her husband was a brother of Christian Joubert, then Minister of Mines, and a relation of the late General Joubert.

Barter was the only form of trade at the period, and most commodities had a fixed price or value. Coffee was 5s. per lb., sugar 1s., rice 1s., butter 6d., eggs 6d. a dozen, and the standard price of a hen was 6d. The country was practically bankrupt. President Kruger; Mr. Bok, State

Secretary; Judge Jorissen, and the Rev. S. J. Du Toit had just gone to England on the mission which resulted in the 1884 Convention. I have been told by Mr. Jacob Maré, then Vice-President of the Executive Council, that the balance standing to the credit of the Republic at the Standard Bank was £2,400. The President wrote a cheque for the £2,000, and drew that sum for the expenses of the mission, thus leaving the State to carry on business with a reserve of £400.

Mention of this mission reminds me of a story told me by the Rev. Du Toit, who acted as interpreter to the mission. At one of the formal interviews with Lord Derby, Colonial Secretary, that gentleman held out firmly for a certain point. Mr. Kruger lost his temper, and, taking up his hat, proceeded to leave the room, saying to Mr. Du Toit, "Tell him that we have hammered the British out of the Transvaal once and we will do it again."

Mr. Du Toit hesitated when Lord Derby asked what Mr. Kruger had said.

Mr. Du Toit apologised for the rudeness of the President, begging Lord Derby not to notice the outburst, as it was merely a mannerism. Mr. Du Toit, in telling me the story, remarked that he had always regretted not having interpreted the President correctly on that occasion. "If I had done so," he said, "that Convention would never have been made."

My capital was by this time becoming exhausted, and already my family and myself were

suffering hardships to which we had never been used; so it behoved me to make an effort to secure some means of livelihood promptly. I saw no prospect of doing anything in the Ventersdorp district; and as the result of a conference with my friends, I set out to Pretoria by cart, bent on finding some source of income there. On the way I outspanned at the farm Wonderfontein, so named because of a marvellous river which there disappears into the earth, and whose subsequent fate is still a subject of dispute. It was in connection with this stream that President Kruger performed one of those tricks that have helped to build up his reputation for smartness. When a scheme was afoot to utilise the stream for the supply of water to Johannesburg, the farmers in the districts below protested strongly, urging that if the water were diverted they would suffer. The President, who was interested in the adoption of the Wonderfontein scheme in preference to some dozen rival projects, replied that the farmers were mistaken in the assumption that Wonderfontein was the source whence they derived their water supply. In order to prove it, he ordered a sackful of corks to be emptied into the well-like cave down which Wonderfontein disappears. "If this stream does come out on your farms," said he, "the corks must come with it."

Not a single cork was ever seen again; the farmers were convinced and withdrew their opposition to the sale of the stream, which duly became the valuable property of concessionaires.

President Kruger well knew when he proposed the test that, as the outlet of the stream was far below its surface, the corks would never pass through, but remain floating in the well just the same as though they had been thrown into a cask, and to this day the farmers are satisfied that their water is supplied by some source other than Wonderfontein.

The owner of the farm was one Oberholzer, who treated me with marked hospitality. He had once entertained Sir Bartle Frere, of whom he spoke with profound admiration. He pointed out a stone on which the Governor had sat while he told Oberholzer of the wonders of the planets, and it was on this occasion that the witticism was perpetrated that Sir Bartle Frere has himself recorded. Having explained that the planets shining above them were worlds like ours and composed of rocks and minerals much the same, Oberholzer pointed to the moon and expressed his opinion that although it might contain many valuable minerals he was sure there were no diamonds there.

"Why do you think that?" asked Sir Bartle Frere.

"If there were diamonds there," replied the farmer, "you English would have annexed it long ago." At that period the dispute over the annexation of Griqualand West with its diamond fields had only just been settled.

It was at this farmhouse I gained my first experience of the squalor and general uncouth-

ness of typical Transvaal Boers. Oberholzer exacted from me a promise to return in time for a birthday celebration to be held a few days later. I did so, and arriving late at night—that is, late according to Boer notions—seven o'clock—found the whole holiday party had retired to sleep after indulging in a literal gorge on a mess of sheep's head and feet called offal, the signs of which were all over their persons. I found thirty-five people—men, women and children—sleeping in a crowd on the floor of the dining-room, an apartment 20 by 14 ft., which with a tiny kitchen formed the farmhouse. I squeezed between two sleepers, and wrapping myself in my blankets, passed the night with them. Of the horrors of that night it would be impossible to write. They are more easily imagined than described. It was an entirely new experience to me, but I have since ceased to feel surprise or embarrassment when sleeping accommodation has been offered me in close contact with members of both sexes. Since those days the Oberholzer family have become wealthy, but life and conduct on the farm are precisely the same as in the period of poverty, and the casual guest or visiting relative still has to sleep on the floor fully-dressed.

The Pretoria I found on my arrival was a very different place from the well-built, well-lighted, even luxurious, capital of to-day. It was not one-twentieth its present size. The Government offices were in a shabby, thatched building now occupied as the tobacco store of Van

Gorkom ; the Raad met in a low, thatched, one-roomed building that to-day would be despised as the meanest coolie store. Where the Presidency now stands the Pretorians shot partridges.

While walking round the town next day I heard an old man in his garden speaking to a Kaffir. I thought I recognised the voice, and approaching nearer, my hand was suddenly grasped by the old man, who, looking piously heavenward, exclaimed fervently, "My wish and prayer have been granted. I have forgotten your name, but I have longed for you."

It was Jacob Maré, the first Transvaaler I had met, eight years before, at Durban Road. The old man took me into his house, and expressed such genuine pleasure that I was quite overcome. I told him of my troubles, and of the motive which had prompted me to come to Pretoria. He listened with sympathy, said that my anxieties were all at an end now, and insisted on my taking up my residence with him. He was at this time Vice-President of the Executive Council, and a wealthy man.

Next morning he went up town, and an hour later returned, putting into my hand an official document by which I was appointed Landdrost (chief magistrate) of Zeerust. I could scarcely realise that the thing was real, and asked for an explanation. "In the absence of the President in Europe," said he, "I am Acting President, and can appoint whom I choose." I soon found

there was no mistake or unreality about the matter, and prepared to hasten home with the good news.

At the boarding-house at which my brother and I stayed we met a Mr. Geldenhuis, a farmer from the Rand, then known as the poorest farming area in the whole Transvaal. He was endeavouring to raise £300 to satisfy a judgment of the Court against him. He asked my brother to purchase his farm for that amount, and, by way of inducement, casually mentioned that there was gold on it, which he offered to show. As my brother could well afford to speculate, I strongly urged him to close with the offer, and it was agreed that we should proceed to inspect the farm next day. In the morning my brother announced that he had decided not to proceed with the matter. Mr. J. Z. de Villiers, later Burgomaster of Johannesburg, and myself did our best to persuade my brother to become the purchaser; but he was obdurate, and Mr. de Villiers eventually lent the needed £300 to satisfy the judgment. Four years later Mr. Geldenhuis sold the farm for £200,000, and to-day the Geldenhuis Estate is one of the richest gold properties on the Rand.

A few days more were spent in "doing" the capital and making the acquaintance of the Raad and the leading Government officials. Then I bade good-bye to my friend and benefactor, the Vice-President, and returned to Ventersdorp.

I had completed the loading of my waggon, and was within an hour of starting for Zeerust, when an official letter arrived requesting me to forego my appointment to the Landdrostship of Zeerust, and take instead the Gold Commissionership of the newly opened De Kaap Goldfields. As the position was worth double that of Landdrost, I had no hesitation in acquiescing, particularly as my experience of either office was about equal. I journeyed via Pretoria, where I was to be sworn in, and among numerous incidents that beguiled the otherwise tedious journey was one which I will recount at the risk of any reflection upon my character.

Among the domestic impedimenta which my family insisted upon carrying was a parrot, whose abode was a cage of unusually ornate character, and probably the first and finest ever seen in the Transvaal. The bird dying on the road, I utilised the cage for a handsome young cockerel, which formed part of the poultry supply usually taken to help out the commissariat on a long trek. On outspanning at a farmhouse, I noticed the farmer eyeing the bird and its gorgeous cage with evident but carefully suppressed amazement. With the characteristic shyness which the Boer always exhibits towards strangers—until broken down by exchanging Christian names and receiving the customary particulars as to the who, where, and whence of the visitor—he refrained from asking any questions as to the mystery of the fowl, which

I could see had completely fascinated him. Presently his curiosity mastered him, and hesitatingly he began to ask what was the meaning of the unwonted spectacle of a common fowl in so elaborate a home. Something in the grave manner of the farmer inspired me with the idea that it would be a pity to disappoint his obvious expectancy of something very much out of the common, so with a warning "Hush!" and a serious face I told him he must not speak so loudly, as he stood in the presence of a sacred bird. The man instantly became solemn. "That bird," I explained, "is the descendant of the cock that crew when Peter told the untruth that you read of in the Bible, and I am taking it to Pretoria to present it to Mrs. Kruger."

Immediately the farmer began to offer terms of purchase, but I pointed out that the bird was morally the property of Mrs. Kruger. "But you can give her another and she will never know the difference," was his answer to the objection. I yielded reluctantly, and accepted six ordinary fowls in exchange. Before I reached Pretoria several farmers were the proud possessors of sacred roosters, and we were never short of poultry for the pot.

If my little fraud is to be justified, I would urge the prejudice and open animosity towards Englishmen existing at that time. Although I spoke the Taal as well as, or even better than, most of the farmers, I was unmistakably English in their eyes, and on several occasions I was

curtly refused the ordinary civilities or accommodation accorded to travellers. In one emergency I successfully disarmed suspicion and animosity by intimating that I was proceeding to Pretoria in order to take up a Government appointment as cook to his Honour the President, my wife being chief washerwoman-elect. The explanation was accepted as satisfactorily accounting for our presumption in asking to be permitted to purchase forage.

CHAPTER III.

Mining Commissioner of De Kaap—Area of the fields—Duties of office—Reception by Diggers—Transvaal flag pulled down—Murders frequent—Putting down Rowdism—Nelmapius as claim jumper—Concessions granted by President—An extraordinary Power of Attorney—Foundation of Barberton—Government reward never paid—Snake in possession of Gold Claim—Government refuses to proclaim the fields—The reason—I arrange the first State loan—Transvaal reserve in Bank 2s. 6d.—I avert national bankruptcy—Cause of the decline of Barberton and De Kaap.

INCLUDING the day's halt at Pretoria, where I was sworn in as a Transvaal official before General Joubert, it took seventeen days to travel from Ventersdorp to the Devil's Kantoor (Devil's office) at De Kaap. No description could convey anything approaching an adequate idea of the difficulties of the journey, so I will not attempt the task, beyond mentioning that at more than one spot along the road the waggon had to be secured from falling sideways by ropes, and occasionally lowered down portions of the mountains. I passed numerous wrecks of earlier expeditions, every kind of vehicle lying about derelict, with such novel items of equipment as violins and other musical instruments. De Kaap had been a gold-field nearly a year, with the Kantoor as its headquarters. My predecessor in the office had fled in fear of his life, finding himself utterly unable to maintain authority among the cosmopolitan

crowd who formed the nucleus of what was soon to become a mining centre of vast importance. Laws and regulations there were none. The Executive had instructed me that I was to do what I thought best, so long as I made the office pay. I found myself with the difficult task of evolving order out of chaos, establishing something like a gold law, and performing the duties of civil and criminal magistrate, coroner, sanitary and mining inspector, postmaster, sheriff, and chief constable. In short, as the Executive informed me, I was "the law." Nor was my task facilitated by the fact that for six months things had been allowed to manage themselves, that period having elapsed since my predecessor relinquished office.

Needless to say, I found a pretty fair imitation of chaos existing. The official revenue was about £250 per month only, for the diggers consulted their own convenience in the matter of paying the licence and other fees. The population of the Kantoor was about fifty, who represented every white nation or people of which I had ever heard. The remainder of the diggers totalled about 2,000, and were scattered throughout the 4,500 square miles that formed the area of the De Kaap Gold-fields. As my duty required a personal inspection of every claim pegged, it is no exaggeration to say that my work was of an onerous and exhausting character, my duties as magistrate, postmaster, official registrar, etc., being varied by long and tiring journeys on

horseback over pathless virgin ground, often involving nights in the bush and days in the saddle.

My reception afforded me an example of the type of men among whom I was expected to establish law and order. My wife was the first woman yet seen in the camp, and as we passed towards the Government office the diggers left off fighting among themselves to flock round the waggon and pull out its occupants. By keeping my whip going I prevented my wife and children being dragged to the ground, and landed them safely at the official Kantoor, a zinc building, 20 by 14, which served the composite character of Civil and Criminal Court, Public Hall, Mining Commissioners' office, post office, and private residence. My staff consisted of myself and a Hollander clerk, while the police force was represented by two Zulus and an old German who was head constable. The town possessed five houses, a dozen tents, and two canteens, where diggers were systematically and noisily drunk all day. The Hollander clerk lost no time in filling my wife's ears with horrible stories of atrocities committed by the miners, and succeeded in scaring my family so successfully that it was weeks before they dared go a yard from the door. These stories were not all exaggerated. Murders were of frequent occurrence, and I had to go somewhere at least twice a week to hold an inquiry into some murder case. The number of unheard of, or rather, unreported, crimes can

only be guessed at, but it must have been considerable. In only one instance did we secure a conviction. In nearly every case the crime was provoked by lust of gold, and I doubt not that many of the victims were done away with either to preserve the secret of a discovery of a reef or rich quartz deposit which they shared, or had been followed and murdered because of a similar find, the crime being perpetrated as soon as the discovery had been located.

Although the diggers as a body resented the enforcement of law and order, and drunken rows, fights, and murders continued, there was a tendency to settle down more quietly as a better class of diggers gradually filtered into the camp. The Transvaal flag had been several times pulled down, and I reported the matter to the Executive at Pretoria. Their instructions were emphatic. I was ordered to stand no nonsense, and not hesitate to shoot. Fortunately, by the use of a combination of tact and firmness I had no occasion to go to extremes, and after I had again hoisted the flag and challenged anyone to pull it down in my presence it was not again interfered with. Probably an example I had made of one troublesome fellow had the effect desired. A number of loafers, of a very objectionable type, had congregated in the camp to the number of about a score. I sent them notice by the white policeman to clear within 48 hours. While sitting in the Court, the ringleader, a drunken, rowdy Scotchman, entered, and, leaning over the table

at which I was sitting, put his fist in my face and proceeded to threaten me in vigorous language. I immediately sentenced him to three months' imprisonment in solitary confinement; but unfortunately there was no jail in the camp, the only method of detaining an incorrigible prisoner being the stocks, which were anchored to a rock in the open. The man was seized by my faithful Zulu constable Saul, who had been standing behind during the scene with upraised knobkerrie, only waiting a sign from me to act, and before he could realise it the prisoner was secure.

As I passed him next day he greeted me with a tornado of oaths and defiance, but by the third day he was thoroughly cowed, and begged me to release him, promising to get into Swaziland without delay. I accepted his terms, and before sunset he was well on his way across the border. We were never troubled by his class again.

An affair that occasioned considerable stir was known as the case of "Culverwell and twenty-eight others." This party of diggers refused to recognise the claims and rights of the Moody Company, and insisted on digging without paying licences; they held that their claim was quite as good as that of Moody's. The result was litigation, Culverwell and his colleagues being summoned to Pretoria on a charge of trespass. They refused to obey the order of the Court until General Joubert came to the Fields with a commando of Burghers and two cannon. He trained the guns on to the part of the camp

inhabited by the recalcitrants and gave them two hours to surrender, failing which, business would begin. Culverwell and Company accepted the inevitable, and joined the General on his return march to Pretoria. The trial duly came on, and the defendants were acquitted on a technical point. Later, the Government appointed a Commission to enquire into the dispute, and in the course of the evidence it came out that the ground claimed by Moody consisted of odd slices and corners left over by him in a survey he made when acting in the capacity of Surveyor-General of the Transvaal, and totalling thirteen farms, equal to 128 square miles of land of immense richness. The diggers whom Culverwell represented had some inkling of the irregular way in which this concession came into being, and refused to recognise it, insisting that the ground was open. The finding of the Commission, which consisted of my old friend Jacob Maré, was in favour of Moody.

A trouble that might have become a source of vexatious litigation was averted by my recommending the diggers to take the law into their own hands. Nelmapius, the pioneer concessionaire of the Transvaal, had received from the Government the right to peg out certain areas not defined or surveyed. It was brought to my notice that Nelmapius was in the habit of waiting till a find had been made, when, by some jugglery, his plans were so altered as to bring his area on or near to the scene of the discovery. The

diggers complained of this, and I advised them to eject Nelmapius and his surveyor the next time they attempted this trick. My advice was acted upon, and after being marched off and threatened with shooting on a repetition, Nelmapius abandoned his claim-jumping habits.

This concession had been granted by the President in the terms of a *besluit* or resolution, always passed by the Raad prior to prorogation. This *besluit* vested in the President full power to do all and anything he might consider proper during the adjournment of the Raad, which pledged itself to ratify any act on its re-assembly. I have often marvelled that this extraordinary handing over of full and unrestricted power to the President has not formed the subject of comment or expostulation. Although a diligent reader of the newspapers I cannot remember ever having seen any comment on the matter. The existence of this Nelmapius concession induced me to ask the Government to supply me with a list of all existing concessions, for my future guidance. Such a list was provided me, when I found there were over one hundred of these concessions, only two of which were generally known to the public. Every one of these valuable privileges had been granted by the President in exercise of the right conferred upon him by this extraordinary power of attorney.

I remember being in the Raad on the occasion when the first meeting was being arranged between President Kruger and the Governor of

Natal. The members were very much exercised as to the details of the meeting. Some wanted to know why Queen Victoria could not come herself and meet the President, instead of sending a representative. Eventually it was decided that the tent in which the meeting was to take place should be pitched precisely on the boundary line between the two countries, so that neither party could be said to have gone over to the other. This triviality occupied two days of solemn debate. At the same sitting the resolution giving the President autocratic power for many months was passed without discussion in two minutes.

The population of the fields grew rapidly day by day. Finds of sufficient richness to attract the attention of men at a distance were of frequent occurrence, and the gold found being up to this time all alluvial, and requiring no costly machinery for its extraction, De Kaap was looked upon as the poor man's paradise, and to it he flocked. The bulk of the immigrants were from the Colony and Natal, and came afoot via Delagoa Bay. It was about this time that a party of reckless diggers, headed by a well-known character named Dick MacNab, took possession of the town of Lorenzo Marques, and held it and its governor for nine days, when they quietly abdicated. Several times a scheme was discussed in the camp, and came near consummation, which, if successful, would have resulted in fifty resolute diggers marching on the Portuguese town and

capturing and holding it permanently. That they would have been physically capable of carrying out their object I have no doubt; but I am not so satisfied as to the holding out part of the project. Internal jealousies would have proved as disastrous as external intervention.

The event which gave a tremendous impetus to the progress and development of De Kaap was the discovery of Barber's Reef by the three brothers Barber, who had been working on Moody's. Although it was known that reef gold existed on the fields, it was generally believed that the wealth of the district consisted rather in its alluvial deposits than its quartz. Nuggets were found practically everywhere; several small ones were actually picked up within a few yards of my office. But the evidence of reef gold was not so clear; nor was it a phase of gold mining generally understood in the camp. With the proving of the Barber's Reef a new era may be said to have begun on the fields. I had communicated the facts of the find to the Government, who instructed me to take the necessary steps to declare the vicinity of the discovery a township. So in February, 1884, in the presence of several diggers, including Messrs. Ede, Rymers, Newmarsh, and Taylor, I broke a bottle of gin—champagne being unobtainable—on the rock containing the gold-bearing quartz, and named the prospective township Barberton, after the discoverers of the reef.

At this time there was a standing reward on offer by the Government of £800, which was to go to the discoverer of a payable reef. When the Barber's Reef had fulfilled these conditions, application was made to the Government for the reward; but no reply was vouchsafed, nor do I know of anyone ever receiving the £800. No one appears to have taken any serious trouble to insist on the Government carrying out its obligation. The discovery of a payable reef was, of course, in itself sufficient reward to render the finder supremely indifferent to a trifle of £800.

The day following the discovery of Barber's Reef a special messenger was sent in to inform me of the finding of the Umvoti Reef, adjoining it. This reef, in addition to being valuable from a gold-producing point of view, nearly became famous as the scene and subject of an entirely original point in the Gold Law. Among the regulations in force was one which provided that if no work were done on a claim for seven consecutive days, it was open to be re-pegged by the first comer. The Umvoti was in possession of Messrs. Ede and Newmarsh, who were obtaining three or four ounces of gold per day merely by the aid of a primitive dolly. On going to work one morning they found a huge fourteen-foot black mamba in possession of their shaft. As a mamba is reckoned the most deadly snake in the country, no one was eager to serve notice of ejectment on him. Work was perforce suspended, and as the days passed but the snake did

not, the owners of the claim grew anxious on the score of the re-pegging clause, and came over to the Kantoor to consult me on the novel point. I accompanied them to the scene, and found the snake in possession as described. The seven days had expired, and certain cute diggers were ready to rush in and take advantage of the supposed lapse. I had advised the owners of the claim what to do, which was to induce a Kaffir to attract the snake into the open, where he could be shot, while they rushed in and resumed work. The plan worked successfully. By the inducement of a reward, a Kaffir's courage was screwed sufficiently high to enable him to pelt the snake with sticks and stones, and worry him till he turned on and chased his tormentor, when the gunners did their duty. The claim-owners promptly re-started work on the claim, and their possession remained undisturbed.

The immediate result of this case was an amendment of the regulations, intended to prevent the jumping of claims on the pretence that they had lapsed through not being worked. When reef claims became the object of the pegger, it was obvious that one man could not work them in the terms required by the regulations, as reef mining, unlike alluvial digging, necessitated the erection of machinery, sinking of shafts, etc., work not within the scope of any one man. My alteration provided that the owners of twelve reef claims could amalgamate their claims into one block, and the prosecution

of work on one claim would protect the other eleven. This clause proved a great boon, and worked satisfactorily.

The story of the rapid rise of Barberton to a flourishing community of 10,000 inhabitants, and its subsequent decline, is too well known to need repetition. It need only be pointed out that the decline was not from any falling-off in the amount or value of the gold extracted there, but owing to the formidable rivalry of the Rand, which attracted practically all the principal capitalists and the bolder speculators. Speaking on the authority of the special facilities accorded me as the Mining Commissioner of De Kaap, I unhesitatingly declare my firm opinion that the Rand has little or no superiority over Barberton as a gold-producing district, except that the one has been most thoroughly developed, and the foundation and general "lay" of the Rand is better known than that of the De Kaap Fields; but this point is dealt with more fully in another and special chapter.

Although the mining industry at De Kaap had now become thoroughly established, the Government had not formally proclaimed the district as a Goldfield. This fact was not generally known to the majority of the diggers, who as a rule troubled nothing about the legal or political aspect of affairs, so long as they had paid for their licence. I had all along been alive to the danger lurking beneath, and I had suspected what I later found to be the truth,

that the Government was purposely withholding the proclamation, so that when it suited the Executive could order the diggers off, and confiscate all that they had done. That this was the intention of more than one member of the Executive I know.

Taking advantage of the production of a number of unusually fine specimens of quartz from newly discovered reefs, among them being the since famous Sheba, I journeyed to Pretoria, bent on inducing the Government to proclaim the De Kaap Goldfields, for I felt I was being made a party to a fraud which the Government was perpetrating on the miners, who for the most part believed they had a secure title to their claims. When I arrived at the Presidency, Mr. Kruger was out. He returned shortly, carrying a roll of tobacco. As he presented me with part of it, he remarked, "See what our Burghers have come to. I've just bought this ten pound roll of tobacco for a shilling, and we have just half a crown in the Standard Bank to keep our account open."

I suggested to the President that the State might raise a loan, say for £10,000, and asked him what security he could offer. He thought for a few moments, then said he would give as security all the salt pans in the country, ten per cent. interest, and a Banking Concession for 99 years. I embodied this liberal offer in a formal letter to the Directors of the Western Province Bank at the Paarl, some of whom were person-

ally known to me. After waiting anxiously for a fortnight, a reply was received, sent by wire as far as the then incomplete telegraphic system could convey it, declining the offer. I then pointed out to the President that a very large revenue could be collected from the De Kaap Fields if the diggers were encouraged by the assurance that their claims were safe. I told his Honour that the fields would produce from this source at least £5,000 per month, but I failed entirely to convince him; he was very sceptical, and for reasons which I have suggested he was strongly opposed to proclaiming the Fields. We argued the point for a long time before the President would concede anything. Then he suggested the following compromise: he would proclaim the Fields for six months, during which time I was to collect as much licence and fee money as possible, taking care to give Burghers and Afrikanders the benefit of any privilege or advantage. I agreed to the offer on the principle that a half-loaf is better than no bread, and hurried back to the Fields to put the proclamation in force. It was received with general satisfaction for the most part, and fees for new licences came in freely, so that within a month I sent to Pretoria £9,000 in sovereigns and nuggets. It was packed on the backs of two horses, and, under the sole charge of a Hottentot boy, arrived at the capital in safety, no one but the Hottentot and myself knowing the nature of the load. This remittance was the largest sum

the Government had ever received. Part of it was utilised to pay off a loan of £6,000, arranged at ruinous interest with a private individual, after the refusal of the Western Province Bank to entertain the business. Up to this time the revenue of the Republic had never exceeded £20,000 per annum, and of this the greater portion was paid in kind. What quantities of firewood, skins, wool, and vegetables used to be piled up in the market-place at Pretoria and turned into cash under the hammer of the Government auctioneer!

My prediction as to the possibilities of the De Kaap Fields as a source of revenue was more than justified. Within a few months I was remitting to Pretoria £10,000 per month, and before the decline came the revenue derived from this source alone per month was double the amount received by the State from every other source at the time I took up the Commissioner-ship.

CHAPTER IV.

Growth of De Kaap—How we built a cheap Government office—
Romantic story of a lost heir—Marriage by instalments—
Discovery of famous reefs: the Thomas, Kimberley Imperial,
Honeybird, Nil Desperandum—The true story of the Sheba
Reef—The stealing of the Hottentot Reef—The stolen 142-oz.
nugget.

As the business of my office had increased to an extent never contemplated either by myself or the Government, I pressed the latter to divide both office and duties by appointing a Mining Commissioner for Barberton, and I suggested as a fit and proper person the Rev. J. L. van der Merwe, who afterwards held the corresponding position at Johannesburg. Having obtained one concession from the Government, I was encouraged to ask another. My office at the Kantoor had become ridiculously inadequate for its multifarious requirements, and I ventured to point out that the vastly improved income from the Fields justified the expenditure of a sum sufficient to erect the modest building for which I sent in a plan. My request was responded to by an assurance that the Government could spare only £200, which I could have if I could put up an office for that amount. I decided to try it. A farmer undertook to deliver stone and lime to the value of £200, and my chief constable, Murphy—a fine and typical Irishman who had succeeded the

German—assured me that there would be no difficulty about the necessary skilled labour.

I remember thinking it most fortunate as well as remarkable that as soon as the work began most of the white men arrested by Murphy turned out to be masons or carpenters, and the short term of imprisonment to which I sentenced them gave them an opportunity for proving extremely useful to the State. We had some difficulty about the painting. The only skilled painter on the Fields had a provoking habit of getting drunk and otherwise breaking the law outside the limits of my jurisdiction. I never heard how Murphy managed it, but just as the assistance of a painter was most needed the only possible one committed himself within sight and reach of Constable Murphy, and the result was the Government had the advantage of three weeks' good work from his brush. The building stands to-day, the cheapest ever erected on behalf of an unappreciative Government. It was this same Constable Murphy who undertook to plant the cuttings that are to-day represented by the very fine grape vine growing on the building. After the work was reported complete I went to inspect it, and noticed one of the prisoners laughing heartily. I asked him what amused him. "I am wondering how you are going to get at your grapes unless you dig for them," said he. Murphy had planted the cuttings root upwards.

He was not the only man I have met in the Transvaal who was hazy about the distinction

between root and stalk. I once noticed some fine cabbages growing on a farm, and offered sixpence for as many as the farmer cared to bring. He brought me three or four, torn up root and all. I told him that he should have cut the cabbage off, and, after notching the stalk, have left it to grow again. "That's all very well," said he, "but we didn't know which part of it people eat."

On the day of my arrival at the Kantoor I had noticed a white child, not more than six years old, busying himself about the waggon, chatting freely in Kaffir to the native servants, and acting in every respect just like a Kaffir child. He was clad in scanty rags, but his face and general demeanour suggested a certain refinement one would scarcely expect under such circumstances. I made enquiries as to who the child was, but got little beyond a vague story that the boy was the son of a man, apparently a gentleman, who had died in the camp a year before. Nobody seemed to know anything about him, except that the child now lived in the bush with the Kaffirs, and in all but colour was one of them. I spoke to him in English. He understood me with apparent difficulty, but answered in Kaffir. I found that he was living the life of a wild animal, hiding in the bush the greater part of the day, emerging by stealth to scrape the leavings of food in the Kaffir cooking pots. I arranged for the child to be looked after by an old butcher, and the camp raised a subscription

to purchase his clothes. Meanwhile, I never missed an opportunity for tracing the origin of the youngster, but learned very little, until an old digger from Mac Mac suggested that the father was probably an engineer who he remembered had died in the camp, and he gave me the name. In looking over an accumulation of letters in the Dead Letter branch of the post office I came upon one addressed to the name which the Mac Mac digger had suggested as that of the child's father. It was four years old, and had followed the addressee all over South Africa. It contained a bank draft for £50, and was written by the mother of the dead man, and urged him to return to his home.

I communicated with the address given, and in due course received an interesting reply, from which I learned that the waif was the son of a man of good family who had contracted a *mésalliance*, and that he was the heir to a considerable property. Money was remitted to enable me to send the child to England, and I sent him in the charge of two trusty Kaffirs to Newcastle in Natal, a distance of some 300 miles, every yard being travelled afoot. He arrived safely in England, where I saw him eight years after, a typical English schoolboy of fourteen. He remembered me instantly, and was able to recall sufficient of the language of his infancy to answer me in Kaffir. One of my most valued mementoes of an eventful career is a field glass sent me by the lad, and just as I am writing this

I notice the names of two of his uncles, one a general and the other a captain, engaged in the operations under Marshal Roberts.

Among the duties of a landdrost is that of marrying couples that way disposed. It happened that the first applicant for my services in this capacity was Dick MacNab, the conqueror of Delagoa Bay. He had become enamoured of a big German maiden, and I went out to his camp on the Lebombo Mountains to perform the ceremony. I had come to that portion of the service where I had to declare them man and wife, when my clerk stopped me abruptly and whispered that he had only just remembered that my appointment as marrying landdrost had not yet been gazetted, and that if I were to proceed with the ceremony I laid myself open to the infliction of heavy penalties. It was an awkward position, and I explained it to the couple. Mac said he didn't much mind himself about being only half married, but the diggers, to the number of a couple of hundred, were waiting for the festivities to begin, and if he told them the thing was off there would be murder. It was therefore agreed that the pair should accept as much of the marriage as the position would allow, and as soon as my appointment was gazetted they were to have the thing properly finished.

A month later, the legal formalities on my part being complete, I journeyed to the camp to finish the marriage. To my surprise I found

Mrs. Mac engaged as a waitress at the canteen, and bearing significant outward signs which suggested that the half marriage had not been altogether a success. She had a sad tale to unfold, explaining to me that she had been compelled to leave Mac, and hoped I would not compel her to complete the contract. I satisfied her that she was still, and could remain, a free woman, for which assurance she was thoroughly grateful. I did not see Mac, but was informed that on hearing of my arrival he had taken to the forest. He was a bit doubtful as to the power of the law to insist on the completion of the marriage, so gave himself the benefit of that doubt by remaining hidden till I was many miles on the return journey.

So many of the reefs discovered during my Commissionership and named by me have been historical that I feel justified in narrating the circumstances of their beginning, particularly as I frequently hear or read versions of these stories that bear very slight resemblance to the original and authentic account of the find as testified to in my office by the actual peggers of the reefs.

The Thomas Reef, for instance, was discovered by a man of that name who had been loafing about Barberton for some time, when a prospecting party, as an act of good nature, allowed him to join them. The first day's journey brought them to a ridge of the Lebombo Mountains, where Thomas, having got hold of some whisky, drank

himself to sleep, and had to be left by his mates when they set off in the morning. On waking, Thomas noticed signs of gold in the rock which had served as his pillow. The stone was studded with nuggets, and the assay test gave the extraordinary return of 100 oz. to the ton. He cut four reefs, pegged himself off a claim, and came into Barberton with a specimen of the quartz. He had no money, and found great difficulty in raising the necessary sovereign to pay for his claim licence. Meanwhile he had shown the specimen to several people, who shadowed him, and when he went out next morning to go through the ceremony of "tapping" his pegs to make the pegging legal, the followers rushed in, and his claim was pegged three or four times over. I had to sit in judgment on the dispute, and gave my decision in favour of Thomas. His brother pegged the adjacent claim, and the two soon sold out their interest to Mr. Ryan, of Capetown, for £70,000 cash. The brothers celebrated their good fortune with great festivity.

I remember that Thomas had been for some time an inmate of the Barberton Hospital. When he obtained his £70,000, I, on behalf of the Hospital, represented that he had an opportunity of repaying his obligation to that institution, which was sorely in need of funds. His reply was to consign the hospital to the devil.

The £1 shares of the Company soon went to £5, but it was over-capitalised, and finally

liquidated, and the discovery of the Thomas Reef induced a number of young Afrikaner prospectors to go further afield in the same direction. They discovered the reef which I named the Kimberley Imperial, because most of the finders were from Diamondopolis. It was a very rich reef, and the samples I still possess are among the richest I have seen. The shares were boomed to £13 apiece, and the finders of the reef made fortunes. Not being used to money, they promptly began to circulate their wealth in the usual manner, the money finding its way into more careful hands by the time-honoured channels. One young idiot of the party gave a notorious barmaid 1,000 shares worth £5 apiece, and his partners perpetrated similar follies. The man who squandered the scrip on the barmaid, after being in possession of no less than £20,000, is at the time of writing working as a labourer on a Cape Colony farm at a wage of £2 per month, just half the sum paid to Kaffirs employed in the mines.

The Honeybird Reef was discovered about the same time, and I named it the Honeybird because its discovery was attributable to the agency of this interesting little creature. The honeybird derives its name from its habit of leading travellers by flying in front of them and uttering a peculiar note, until it pauses on a tree or rock where wild bees have their nest. As soon as the honey-comb is extracted by the man, the bird boldly claims its share, which it eats on the spot. A man

named McDonald was in the neighbourhood of the Kimberley Imperial when he was induced to follow a honeybird. Instead of leading him to a bees' nest, the bird, as it often will, guided him to a snake, which he dispatched. While engaged in doing so he noticed a quartz reef distinctly showing visible gold, and subsequent assay and test gave results that led eventually to fortune.

The Sheba Reef Gold Mining Company was probably the best known gold mine in the world, and there are not wanting those who claim for it premier position on every count. Many stories are afloat as to the origin of this valuable property, but this is the first time the authoritative version has been made public.

Among the better-class speculators on the Fields in 1884 was Mr. Percy Whitehead, an engineer who had erected the first mining machinery of any extent in South Africa at the Barrett's Berlyn property, and who was engaged in similar work at Moodies. He turned up one day and informed me that he had just brought out two gold experts—one from California, the other from Australia. He suggested that I should adopt the method in vogue in those countries—set apart an area for prospecting. I fell in with the idea, and marked out two pieces of ground, each a mile in area, for which a six months' prospecting licence was granted to the two experts. Prospecting had been going on about four months when a young Afrikaner brought me a very fine

specimen of quartz which he had discovered while walking over part of the ground then being prospected by Mr. Whitehead. He wished to peg, but I had to point out that this would be impossible while Mr. Whitehead had the prospecting licence, but that the ground could be pegged at the expiration of the six months if the reef had not in the meantime been discovered by Whitehead's prospectors.

Shortly after this Mr. Whitehead informed me that his prospectors had reported very badly of De Kaap, and particularly of the portion they were then engaged in prospecting. I pointed out that in that case it was not fair to others to keep them from prospecting the ground, whereupon he formally abandoned his rights over the two prospecting areas. I informed the young Afrikaner that the ground was now open, and he proceeded to peg a claim, asking me to name certain others who could also peg claims on the reef and work with him. I nominated about a score of diggers, who agreed to work in conjunction with the original finder of the reef, and licences for claims were taken out in their names. The reef I named the Oriental, for some special reason, which, however, has escaped my memory.

While these matters were proceeding a notorious Boer character on the Fields, who came before the public during the war as the General Pretorius whom Marshal Roberts captured, brought me a specimen of quartz which he said was from a reef near the Oriental. He

made certain propositions to me intended to secure himself an exclusive privilege, which I rejected, and almost simultaneously Mr. Edwin Bray found the reef and pegged it. I named it the Golden Quarry, because it more nearly resembled stone in gold than gold in stone. Shortly after, Mr. Bray's partners discovered another reef, which I named the Edwin Bray, and about the same time a harmless lunatic who had kept the camp amused by his eccentricities startled us by discovering the reef which I christened the Nil Desperandum. I looked after the interests of this discoverer. He made some £12,000 as the result of his find, which has secured him a life of ease in his native Ireland.

Subsequently these four reefs, the Oriental, Golden Quarry, Edwin Bray, and Nil Desperandum, were amalgamated under the name of the Sheba Reef Gold Mining Company, and commenced that career of golden prosperity that has been the wonder of the world. The shares ran up to unprecedented prices, at one time changing hands at £120 per £1 share. The Golden Quarry proved the pick of the bunch, and at the commencement of operations there was sufficient quartz in sight to keep 100 stamps going for twenty years, yielding $4\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to the ton. For reasons never satisfactorily explained the Directors—mainly London men who had never seen the mine—decided on spending an enormous sum on sinking a shaft to test the depth of the reef, instead of working at what was in sight. The

Sheba Reef may be said to be *the* gold mine of the world, and is likely to continue in this proud position for very many years.

A considerable sensation was caused by the discovery of a reef which I named the Hottentot. It assayed at 10,000 oz. to the ton, so that it is not surprising that a vigorous dispute as to the ownership and priority of pegging culminated in a law suit; but this came to an abrupt termination on the discovery that while the litigants were fighting someone had run off with the reef. It proved to be only a rich patch or pocket, soon exhausted, so that, with the exception of the thief, the only persons who profited by it were the lawyers in Pretoria.

Another interesting find almost brought about a quarrel between the Transvaal and Natal Governments. Twenty miles from the Kantoor there was a lofty peak which had defied many attempts to scale it. Two young Englishmen managed by the aid of ropes and some mountaineering skill to get to the top, and were rewarded by finding on the crest of the peak a nugget weighing 140 oz. and another of 21 oz. They buried them in their tent and sent for me to inspect them. On opening the hole both nuggets had disappeared. Mutual recriminations resulted in the dissolution of the partnership. I had both carefully watched for some time, in hopes of getting a clue to the lost nuggets. After some months I learned that a farmer near Pietermaritzburg, who was related to one of the finders of the

nuggets, found pushed under his door a scribbled note, advising him to search beneath a certain peach tree in his orchard, where he would find something to his advantage. He acted on the advice, and found the large nugget. I reported the facts to Pretoria, and the Executive communicated with the Natal Government, claiming the stolen nugget. A long correspondence ensued, but Natal refused to surrender the gold, and the incident was there closed.

The mystery of the disappearance of the nuggets has never been revealed, and belongs to the vast number of such secrets that have added interest to the otherwise prosy commonplace of life on the Goldfields, though fortunately there was nothing of the tragic about this incident—a feature that entered too largely into gold robberies in those days.

CHAPTER V.

Kruger's visit to De Kaap—He describes a mint—Hostility of the Barberton diggers—His reception—Makes his only speech in English—Sharing a bed with the President—His "diplomacy"—The Reverend Mining Commissioner and his Funeral Sermon—Some Kruger stories told by himself.

It was an important and red letter day in February, 1885, when I received official notice that his Honour, President Kruger, would, in the terms of the law which required him to make a tour of the State once a year, visit the De Kaap Goldfields. The Government missive gave me full instructions as to his reception, and emphasised the necessity for taking special precautions to ensure the personal safety of the President. On this score I had no misgivings, but I was a trifle apprehensive as to how the diggers would greet him. There was a growing feeling of dissatisfaction with the Government among the diggers, who were a cosmopolitan crowd, and could in no sense be regarded as loyal. Genuine Transvaalers among them were rare; indeed, in all my experience I have only met one Transvaal digger. He was old Gous, one of the Voortrekkers, whose many and startling adventures in the country would have made the hero of an average sensational novel a very milk-and-water personage.

The diggers were very sore on the subject of the manner in which the Fields had been proclaimed. They regarded it as a subterfuge, and there were rumours and mutterings which showed that somehow the diggers had got a very fair idea as to what really was the Government object. Altogether they were in a very dissatisfied mood, and doubtless there were very many points on which a definite understanding with the Government was highly desirable.

So strongly did they feel that a public meeting was held at Barberton, presided over by the Mining Commissioner, at which a resolution framed in the most unfriendly spirit was passed, expressing the wish of the diggers that the President would refrain from visiting Barberton. This resolution was forwarded to my office at the Kantoor, where I found it on my arrival with the President, and it occasioned me quite as much surprise as it did his Honour; for although I was well aware of the feeling of dissatisfaction, I did not think it would find vent in quite so uncompromising a style. Although I was aware of the hostile disposition of the diggers at Barberton towards the head of the State and the Government in general, I had no idea of what form it would take when I rode out to De Lange's farm at Machadodorp, where I met the President, accompanied by an armed escort of Lydenburg Burghers. That afternoon a meeting was held of the Burghers of the district, whom the President addressed. Among other things he told

them that he had made arrangements for erecting a mint at Pretoria. He explained to them what a mint was, and its object, he said, was to turn into sovereigns the gold discovered on the farms of the Burghers, who would take it to the mint as they would their corn to the mill, and have it turned into coin while they waited. He attempted a description of the minting process, which was delightfully inaccurate; but the Burghers were charmed, and immediately passed a resolution expressing their confidence in the Government in general and the President in particular. I remember one statement in his address caused the greatest enthusiasm. "When we have the mint," he said, "we can make our own gold, and need no longer look to England for it."

That evening the President held a religious service. This was the first time I had heard him sing. To my surprise he possessed a really fine musical baritone voice, audible at a great distance. That night the President and I slept together on the only bed in the house, a rude structure known as a cartel, consisting of a wooden framework over which are stretched narrow strips of ox hide. His Honour of course slept fully dressed, except that he removed his boots and used them for a pillow. For many reasons I shall never forget that night.

On the journey to the Kantoor the President asked me many questions about the diggers, whom he appeared to regard as desperadoes of the most pronounced type. He had not forgotten

that my predecessor had abandoned his office through fear of them, and I could see that the stories of outrages in the camp had not lost anything in their narration at Pretoria. I told his Honour that the diggers were prepared with several complaints and requests, among the latter being a demand to be represented in the Raad. This appeared to take him by surprise, for he told me that he would occupy the rest of the journey in thinking over what he should say to them.

When we arrived at the Kantoor we found that my attempt to invest the otherwise barren camp with a festive appearance had proved a success. Palms and tree-ferns had been planted in the street, the children strewed flowers and sang the Volkslied, and the daughter of a "leading citizen" presented the President with a bouquet, which he promptly threw under the seat of the cart. On reaching the Government building I found the Barberton diggers' resolution, which I read to his Honour, who immediately flew into a violent passion, demanding to know how the Mining Commissioner dared to send him such a document. He would go to Barberton, he said, even if he had to walk the thirty miles, and would show these diggers that he was not afraid of them, and was not going to be told where he should or should not go. When he had cooled down a little I ventured to direct his attention to several very fine specimen nuggets that had been brought in for his inspection by the diggers. He

glanced unconcernedly at them, and showed the same indifference when I took him to an alluvial claim and explained the method of working it. Although this was the first time he had seen the process of gold extraction, he manifested not the slightest interest in anything pertaining to it, but took no pains to conceal that he was very much bored.

His Honour passed the night at my house, and throughout the visit talked of anything but the Goldfields. Although he was some hours in my office, surrounded by material of the most suggestive description, he never once asked a question indicating the faintest curiosity as to the prospect or welfare of the Fields to which he owed so much. In fact, his attitude towards the diggers was that of some old gentleman who, for the sake of peace and to avoid the trouble of saying them nay, had permitted a few children to exploit his orchard, their stay there being entirely dependent on their good behaviour and the continuance of his good humour.

The conversation at supper, and until he retired at his usual early hour, was restricted to a narration of some of the incidents connected with his recent visit to Europe, and a vigorous criticism of the manners and customs of Continental hotels, at one of which, in Paris, he declared they had palmed upon him a meal of cat's flesh.

Next day the President and I set out for Barberton on horseback, a wheeled vehicle being

unknown in the camp in those days. On arriving at the Phoenix Hotel we found the diggers assembled, to the number of some five or six hundred. I regret to have to say that the remarks of the crowd on the personal appearance of the President were not calculated to remove the bad impression he had formed of them. It must be admitted that the dirty, travel-stained look of his Honour hardly harmonised with the popular idea as to what a State President ought to look like. The criticisms were of the brutally free and jocular character peculiar to rough crowds, and I am glad that at the time I shared the general belief that the President did not understand English. I did not know the remarks were understood by the subject of them, for his face and manner gave no sign that he had heard. When, however, we had retired to the office, his Honour relieved his lacerated feelings by soundly rating the Mining Commissioner for not coming to meet him as I had done. The charge was hardly just, for the Mining Commissioner had ridden out to meet us on the road and request us to slacken our pace in order to give the diggers time to finish an address they were supposed to be preparing. I have a strong suspicion, however, that that address was entirely the work of the Mining Commissioner.

The next day being Sunday, the President mentioned that he would like to have a religious service. It then occurred to me that as the Mining Commissioner of Barberton was a minister



of the Dutch Reformed Church, it would be fitting that he should officiate. I suggested this to the President, who approved, and instructed me to inform the Mining Commissioner that he was to resume his sacred office for the occasion. That gentleman was considerably staggered by the command, and protested his unfitness on the ground of surprise; but the President would take no excuse. The office was turned into a temporary church, and a congregation of thirty crowded it. They consisted mainly of the presidential escort, who had been busy looting cattle from native kraals to supply the commissariat and relieve the monotony of a Sunday among the Rooineks.

The Reverend Mining Commissioner opened with a prayer, and then gave out a hymn. I was startled by an angry snort from the President and the banging of his Psalm-book. It occurred to me that his Honour, being a Dopper, would regard the singing of a hymn as a heretical outrage. I whispered the fact to the Commissioner, who turned to the President and apologised for his blunder, then gave out an orthodox psalm, which appeared to bring his Honour to a most Christian frame of mind. When the time came for the sermon the Commissioner explained that he had not had time to prepare one, but he had the MS. of a funeral discourse he had delivered on the occasion of the death of an aunt in the Colony, which he would give them. The President nodded assent, and the Mining Commissioner opened his MS., and,

indicating the chief of the escort by a gesture, began :—" There lies the corpse with fast-closed eyes." This was too much for the Burgher who was made to represent the corpse. Vainly endeavouring to stifle a laugh, he let it go, and rushed from the room. We sat out the melancholy discourse, and when it was over the President abused me forcibly for having suggested the fitness of the Mining Minister for the conduct of the service, while the latter has never forgiven me, or held me guiltless of what he believes to have been a pre-arranged affair.

The following day the formal reception of the diggers was held. They turned up in force, their spokesman ready with a formidable document, demanding reforms and dictating terms. This was the first time I had had an opportunity of seeing President Kruger as a diplomat, and his combined tact and astuteness came as an agreeable surprise, and elicited my genuine admiration. Before the malcontents could get in a word, he rose, and, speaking in Dutch, I interpreting, completely took the wind out of the sails of the spokesman by declaring his surprise and pleasure at finding so fine and respectable a body of men, who, he added, with a glance at the spokesman's manuscript, ought to be represented in the Raad. The effect was tremendous. Immediately the crowd gave cheers for the President, the spokesman of the deputation leading, and the rest of the proceedings passed off without a hitch. He agreed with everything they said or suggested,

and impressed upon them the wisdom of immediately drawing up a formal petition for Raad representation, which, he said, he would personally take charge of. The diggers were delighted. The political Committee rushed off to the hotel and arranged for a champagne lunch, to which we all adjourned. The speeches were of the most enthusiastic nature, and the champagne flowed as it only can when excited miners with well-filled pockets are the hosts.

When the President rose to reply to the toast of his health, I also rose to interpret. His Honour waved me down, and, to the astonishment of myself and everyone present, spoke in very good English. This proved the only occasion on which President Kruger ever spoke in English to a public assembly, and the surprise and delight of the diggers were unbounded. He flattered them on their orderly behaviour, expressed his pleasure at finding so fine a body of men, and silyly hinting that he hoped his personal appearance was now less objectionable to them, repeated his determination to see them represented in the Raad. Finally he exhorted them not to forget the petition. It was a triumph of diplomacy and cunning.

During the journey homewards next day I noticed his Honour frequently chuckling and laughing to himself. I asked him what amused him. "I'm thinking of that petition," he said. "It's the last they'll ever hear of it"; and he spoke the truth.

I managed to obtain a conveyance for the return journey. It was the business cart of the Barberton butcher. The President and I mounted it, and the local photographer took a memento picture of us. It was a distinct success, but both of us rather wished that the photographic process were a trifle less accurate, for on the side of the cart appeared the words "and pork sausages."

The return journey proved to me a very pleasant one, for his victory over the diggers had put the President in an excellent humour, and he told me several stories of himself that I have not seen in print. One was very characteristic.

As a young man, he said, he was regarded as an authority on psalm-singing, and the farmers used to come to him to learn the key-note for starting the psalms at the next Sunday's service. Paul Kruger even in those days was no believer in the policy of giving anything away, not even a note of music, so he had a uniform charge of a double handful of dried peaches for his instruction. Even the fact that the work was in the service of religion did not deter him from resorting to verneukery, for he made a point of giving each applicant a different note. The result when the pious Doppers attempted to raise their voices in sacred harmony next Sunday may be imagined. The result was that each man concluded he had lost the key, and had to return for a further lesson. "I nearly bankrupted them of their dried peaches," said the President, who told the

story with the air of a man who keenly enjoyed the recollections it revived.

On another occasion, being out with a commando fighting Kaffirs in the very early days, they were very short of food. Returning to camp one evening, he found a party enjoying a feast of roasted meat, but they refused to let him share. In a moment he had thought out a plan for securing a portion of the feast. He went to the river, and, having poured out the powder from his horn, re-filled it with water. Approaching the fire round which the feasters sat, he began a discourse on the misery the party were enduring, which, he said, made life no longer worth living. As for himself, he had fully decided to make an end of his troubles, and to go where there would be no more starvation and misery. Having arrested the attention of his audience, he ostentatiously produced his powder-horn and threw it on the fire. Next moment there was not a burgher within sight except young Kruger, who helped himself to the best of the cooking meat and went off to enjoy the fruits of his strategy.

Another story illustrating Paul Kruger's "slimness" was not told by the subject of it, but by one who had been present at the "manifestation." A party of burghers were out hunting, but game was unusually scarce. After waiting patiently for a few days, Paul Kruger told his friends that he had determined to make it a matter of prayer; that for this purpose he

would retire to the bush, where he was not to be sought after or disturbed, however long he might be absent. He saddled up and retired to wrestle in prayer. A day or so later the game became more than plentiful, and the pious burghers had their faith in the efficacy of prayer wondrously strengthened. They did not know that young Kruger had ridden to a Kaffir kraal and explained to them that unless they beat up the game and drove it in a certain direction, keeping themselves well out of sight, he would bring a Boer commando down upon them.

In addition to being an expert horseman, Paul Kruger was a powerful swimmer and diver. He told me the following. A hunting party of which he was a member were puzzled to account for the disappearance of a number of skins. Kruger happened to notice one lying in a cavern beneath the water of the river. He dived into it, and there discovered the whole lot that were supposed to have been lost. But he also found something else. As he entered the submarine cave half-a-dozen crocodiles rushed out, scared by the intrusion of the owner come to claim his property so unceremoniously.

The story of the snake and the eel was one which the President told with great gusto. While on a hunting trip he caught an eel, and placed it to roast on the fire. During his absence the Hottentot servant had caught a great delicacy—a yellow snake—and proceeded to cook it, having first removed the eel and hung it on a tree. He

then went about his camp duties, and the master returned, and finding the eel, as he naturally believed it to be, ate it. While so engaged the Hottentot returned, and, the blunder having been discovered, Paul Kruger relieved his feelings on the Hottentot with the aid of a sjambok, and prepared to carry out his gospel of retributive justice. Loading his rifle, he mounted the waggon and ordered the boy to take up his position under a tree near by. "Stand there," said his master. "As soon as I begin to feel bad I am going to shoot you."

Some anxious moments for both parties passed, and lengthened into many minutes, when Paul Kruger concluded that his end was not by that route, and was almost converted to the Hottentot theory that yellow snake and eel are much the same.

Very many stories are told of Paul Kruger's expertness as a horseman. When purchasing a horse, he would gallop it over the most difficult and dangerous country, and if the animal fell he rejected it. A throw only landed him on his feet. He told me that when out hunting buffalo he always rode head to tail, as this creature is most dangerous when pursuing the hunter, and this position enabled him to get in an effective shot. He rarely mounted his horse by the stirrup, but vaulted into the saddle, and when driving a span of oxen and desiring to get to the other side instead of passing behind the waggon he would use his long whip stick

as a jumping pole, and spring over the oxen's backs.

There is no reason for doubting that as a young man Paul Kruger was not only remarkably powerful, but possessed a degree of courage that was extraordinary even at a time when that quality was an every-day requisite in everybody. This was strikingly illustrated by a story he told me of his attempt to catch a lion alive. He had heard that certain Englishmen in Capetown would give a large sum for a living lion, so he determined to earn the money. Armed with a lasso, he tracked a lion to cover, and prepared to lasso him. He had with him a very large dog, which, running in to attack the animal, was killed by the stroke of its paw. This incident impressed young Kruger with the enormous strength of the King of Beasts, and decided him that the contest would be too one-sided.

The President told me many other similar stories, but most of them having been already printed do not call for repetition here. One incident on the road amused me at the time. The President went on ahead of me for a couple of miles and met his escort. When I came up I found him sitting opposite a heap of well-chewed sugar-cane, which had formed his lunch in preference to a cold collation brought with us. He had got rid of some fifty or sixty pieces of cane, reserving two for me.

When the time came for my returning to the Kantoor, the President expressed great solicitude

for my welfare and begged me not to travel till the moon was up, "for," said he, "I know this mountain well; there are lions here."

The crowning surprise of the visit was reserved for the end. As we parted he put seven sovereigns into my hand, and insisted on my taking them as a contribution towards the expense his visit had put me to. I reluctantly yielded, and can say I am the only man whom Paul Kruger offered to compensate for losses incurred on his account.

CHAPTER VI.

Camp characters—Charlie the Reefer's secret cave—Lost and derelict reefs—Salting with a shot gun—French Bob's discoveries—Proclamation of Steynsdorp—Mining Commissioner mistaken for a pedlar.

In a camp whose units represented all sorts and conditions of men, as ours at De Kaap did, it was but natural that there should be many interesting and remarkable characters. Such a one was Charles Anderson, a digger who had had considerable experience in other mining centres as a reef miner, as distinct from a digger on an alluvial field. For this reason he was known as "Charlie the Reefer." He was an industrious prospector, and a list of his discoveries would form a valuable guide to future explorers in De Kaap. He had not been long in possession of his prospecting licence before he came in with a bag full of nuggets which he turned into sovereigns at the Bank and proceeded to dispense in the approved method of the miner of his type all the world over. He began by calling on me and depositing £10.

"What is that for?" I asked.

"To pay my fine."

"But I don't know of any fine."

"That's all right. I'm a careful man. I always pay my fines in advance. I'm off on a spree and am sure to get run in, and it makes me feel more

comfortable to know that the fine is provided for."

Regularly every three months he would come into camp, cash his nuggets, deposit his fine, and start on a week's spree, never leaving till he had got rid of his money, though generally his fine came in as a useful reserve, for he did not always forfeit it. The amount of gold he invariably brought in soon began to excite curiosity, and many attempts were made to follow him and discover his "patch;" but despite his alcoholic weakness he was marvellously methodical in his madness, and to the last he preserved his secret, always being able to throw his pursuers off the scent. At length he took me into his confidence and revealed the mystery.

It appears that he had a theory as to the secret of the alluvial deposits of De Kaap Valley. This valley, he pointed out, was originally a shallow basin, and the nuggets found on the surface had been washed from the hills that formed the walls of the basin.

"This process," he said, "has been going on for ages; therefore the basin has been gradually filled up by the soil washed from the hills, and tons of gold in nugget form still lie in that basin at varying depths." It followed, therefore, that the more profitable system of mining in De Kaap Valley would be to sink shafts instead of scratching the surface, and to tap the lower strata. In following out this theory Charlie kept a sharp look out for anything in the shape of a cave or

natural shaft that would be likely to open up the lower depths. He found this in a cave or tunnel, apparently an old watercourse that penetrated the earth at the base of a hill, making a steep angle. On descending he found at a depth of between a hundred and a hundred and fifty feet a rich store-house of alluvial gold. He refused to take out a licence for pegging and working the claim in the usual way for a reason that has induced many other prospectors to keep their secret and content themselves with the result of their own unaided work.

His find was near the ground over which Nelmapius held an expandable concession, and though not actually within the Nelmapius boundary, it would have been easy and natural for an influential man like Nelmapius—the private confidential friend and benefactor of the President—to extend his boundary so as to include this valuable find, knowing that if it came to a fight he could safely rely upon the support of the Government to oust any rival.

Thus it came about that Charlie the Reefer refused to disclose his secret, and preferred to isolate himself for months at a stretch, not even having the assistance of a Kaffir, but quite content to win enough gold to enable him to enjoy himself in his way four or five times a year. I went out once with him to locate the spot, but he refused to peg it, so there being no necessity to force his hand the spot remained undeclared, and only awaits another worker.

The records in my official notes of abandoned and derelict claims and finds would keep an exploration syndicate busy for many a day.

Looking back, I sometimes regret that I did not take steps to turn these finds to better account; but at that time we were so fully occupied with the development of what was within sight and near at hand that we had neither time nor inclination for going far afield. Then again the average digger was not a capitalist, and when he had started work on his own claim he was not easily tempted to divide his energies over others in which he would have to share with one or more partners. He believed in his own claim, and preferred the certainty to the uncertainty. For a long time, too, the capitalists were very shy of embarking in ventures on the Fields, for there was a pretty strong feeling that all the finds, however rich, were patchy and likely to be exhausted suddenly.

I once selected specimens from a particularly rich reef, sent them to a number of married men of my acquaintance in the Colony, and urged them to come to the financial aid of the finder. They reluctantly consented to send a representative, who got as far as Pretoria. There he heard such alarming reports of the fever-stricken character of De Kaap that he refused to come on, and the thing fell through. Another attempt to enlist outside financial assistance resulted in materially prejudicing the Fields in the eyes of capitalists. A fairly rich reef had been discovered

and named the Welcome. A party of Natalians were tempted to come up and investigate, with a view to investment. Hearing that they had arrived, the owner, a Boer, went to the claim during the night and fired gold dust from a shot gun all over the reef. The fraud was immediately discovered, and the intending investors left, thoroughly disgusted with De Kaap and its ways. The story got into the papers in Natal and the Colony, and it is easy to believe that it did considerable damage to the reputation of the Fields and scared away many who would otherwise have embarked capital in promising properties.

Another reason why these finds were not always estimated at their true value was the belief, then current, that a reef that assayed less than an ounce to the ton was not worth troubling about. The cyanide process was unknown then; consequently an assay did not give anything like the real value of a reef. Its value was based on the results of panning alone, and what was not visible was supposed to be non-existent. Further, where gold was not plainly apparent no panning was done—in fact, the digger only troubled about the visible, and as the quartz showing gold bears a very small ratio to that carrying it in highly payable quantities, yet showing nothing externally, hundreds of rich reefs must have been passed over.

Another prolific and industrious discoverer of reefs destined to be added to the long list of derelicts was a prospector well known, and to-day the subject of many stories in mining circles.

He was called French Bob, mainly, I believe, because he was not French and his real name was not Bob. He was a frequent visitor at my office to report finds and deposit samples of fairly uniform richness. I do not know how it was, but he never appeared to derive much personal benefit from his discoveries. I think his erratic character and fondness for litigation made financiers chary of having dealings with him. His discoveries were good enough, but so far as my note-book shows he was content with the mere discovery. After a little preliminary fuss the last find would soon be abandoned for another, which in turn passed into the limbo of forgotten things. This prospector was one of the few who endeavoured to induce the Government to keep its promise to pay £800 to the discoverer of a payable reef. He fulfilled all the conditions required, but never received any answer to his frequent applications.

Once I made an effort to persuade the President to acquire and work on behalf of the State one of these very rich discoveries; but nothing came of it, and I soon realised that it was useless to hope for any assistance from that quarter. In no case that I remember has the Government done a thing that can be constructed into a desire to help the gold industry. From the first day that it took official cognisance of the existence of gold in the country to the last, its policy has been one either of passivity or actual opposition. The proclamation of new Fields has only been

brought about by the exercise of long and influential pressure, and it would be easy to show that when the Government has yielded it has always been influenced by the object of benefiting a relation of the President, or some member of the inner ring at Pretoria.

When the Goldfield at Koomati was proclaimed I went over to inspect and name the township that was to be laid out there. I gave it the name Steynsdorp, out of compliment to Commandant Steyn, who accompanied me as the other Government representative. On the way back to the Kantoor I met a party of trek Boers—that is, farmers trekking to settle in a new district. I took advantage of their apparently being in quest of a new home to commend De Kaap to their notice. I painted the advantages likely to accrue to them from taking up their abode there in the midst of a rising community that would provide a market for their produce. I offered them a 6,000 acre farm apiece for £5 a year; and by way of throwing the weight of authority upon my recommendation, I told them that I was Landdrost and Mining Commissioner of De Kaap. Then for the first time one of the party spoke. He enquired if I had any cheap trouserings for sale! I—the Administrator and Lord High Everything of a tract of country larger than Yorkshire and Lancashire, that provided seven-eighths of the revenue of the State—taken for a pedlar! This Republican simplicity is not flattering to official vanity.

CHAPTER VII.

A great Kaffir King—How the Boers acquired Swaziland—Umbandine as a sportsman—His fifty-eight wives and their perpetual youth—Wonderful native medicines—The Elixir of Life a royal secret—Kaffir secret telegraphy—Witch doctors and divination—The wonderful egg trick—Malay magic—Royal oxen—Kruger and the Kaffir band—I resign my Commissionership.

DURING my Commissionership of De Kaap I was brought in contact with Umbandine, King of Swaziland, and had an opportunity of watching the growth of the policy of land-grabbing by the Transvaal Government which ended in the annexation of that fine country to the Republic. The annexation was made with the consent of Great Britain, but was viewed with disgust by every Britisher who knew what the surrender of a valuable possession really meant. Umbandine, like several Kaffir chiefs, had a white man as adviser and private secretary, the holder of this important office being a Dutchman named Steyn, who filled the dual position of adviser to Umbandine and secret agent of the Transvaal Government. It was this Steyn who originated the ingenious plan that gave the Transvaal farmers an excuse for claiming proprietorial rights in the country, and this proceeding eventually led to the dispute that ended so disastrously for the Swazis and their independence.

Steyn encouraged the farmers on or near the border to apply for leave to graze their cattle on certain areas in the Swazi country, and as adviser to the King he supported their application, which was always granted on the presentation of a bunch of black ostrich feathers, valued highly by the King as ornaments for his wives. In a very short time a large tract of Swaziland was absorbed by Transvaal farmers, so that when the dispute arose it was easy to make out an excellent case for these squatters. The tentative right to graze was construed into permanent ownership when the time came for action, and the farmers coolly claimed the lands as theirs by right of purchase.

The British Government feebly resented these claims, but made no attempt to defend the just cause of Umbandine, who was left to the tender mercies of the Transvaal Government. In due course the territories in dispute were "gathered in" by the Pretoria oligarchy, and the laxity of the British authorities, not without precedent in South Africa, was productive of a world of trouble. For the time the Swazis' estimate of British prowess was considerably lowered by what they regarded as a surrender to the Transvaal.

Umbandine was a fair sample of the once powerful savage ruler demoralised by his contact with civilisation. He had possessed many manly qualities and had the elements of a successful chieftain in him, but alcohol proved

his undoing. The Swazi ruler sank to the lowest depths of brutal sensualism, thanks to imported gin which came over the frontier by the waggon load. Being generally drunk, he fell an easy prey to the concession-hunter. At the time the British took over the country he was favourably considering an application which may well rank as the masterpiece of concessionaire impudence—an application for a concession to grant concessions in Swaziland.

Umbandine grew immensely stout in his later years, and not being able to go afield to gratify his inordinate love of game shooting, he would order his Kaffirs to drive the buck to the royal enclosure, where, seated on his chair, he would empty his rifle among them. At one of these battues at which I was present he accidentally killed a Kaffir who had got into the line of fire, and I afterwards heard that he fined the widow twelve oxen because her husband had spoiled the royal sport.

Another favourite diversion of the King's was to order his fifty-eight wives to deck themselves in their finery of black ostrich feathers and perform a dance for the edification of special visitors. It was a very imposing spectacle, particularly as the women were physically the finest and most handsome I have ever seen among Kaffir tribes.

A very remarkable fact in this connection was that these women retained their juvenility long after the age at which the Kaffir female

shows signs that her first youth has passed. The circumstance was so striking and noteworthy that I made it my business to ask for an explanation from the King's adviser. He told me that the art of preserving the youthful appearance was a royal secret practised by the medicine men, and that the brilliant results accruing from the use of this secret elixir had often been remarked upon by observant travellers.

I had heard of some such process of "doctoring" as that mentioned by Steyn, and had attached no weight to it, but the sight of these marvellously preserved royal wives renewed my curiosity in the subject, and I made further inquiries into the matter. The result of my investigations satisfied me that the Kaffirs do really possess the secret of some mysterious medicine which retards the natural process of physical decay. The medicine, like all Kaffir specifics, is the product of a herb, and is administered in powder form once only, when the girl has reached a certain age. The result is apparently precisely what we are told follows the use of the traditional elixir of life. The girl retains all the outward signs of youth. Her eyes are bright, her flesh firm, her limbs shapely and supple. Not a line shows on her face, and in this condition she will remain for thirty or forty years. She bears no children, that privilege being reserved to the eldest wife alone. Um-bandine, despite the possession of fifty-eight wives, had only two or three children, and these

by the chief wife. The idiotic, drunken Bunu, who died or was otherwise removed by the Queen-mother just before the Boer War, was the eldest.

I was the more interested in this matter because it partially explained a mystery that had puzzled me for a long time. I had known two Swazi girls for fifteen years, and saw them at frequent intervals during that period; yet I could see no change in them from the day I first met them. They had the appearance of healthy, well-developed girls of about eighteen, and as such remained. When I inquired of them the reason for their continuous youth, they replied that they had been "doctored" by the witch doctor, but I attached no importance to their explanation till I encountered so many living corroborations of a fact previously supposed to be merely a freak of nature. I took great pains to verify the ages of these youth-endowed royal wives, and satisfied myself that they had in every case reached that stage when, in the ordinary course, a woman has lost every trace of her girlhood. It must be remembered, too, that Kaffir women age very rapidly, a woman of thirty looking the equal in age of a white woman of fifty. I am convinced that this subject will repay a scientific investigation.

That the natives possess the knowledge of the effects of plants utterly unknown to European science is a fact too well established to be questioned. Some of their cures are little short

of marvellous, as any man who has lived for any considerable time with native tribes can testify. Despite the growth of medical knowledge, no qualified physician can boast of such uniform success in treating dysentery, fever, snake-bite, etc., as the skilled Kaffir doctor. I say "skilled" advisedly, for there are a number of incompetent pretenders among the members of the Kaffir "medical profession." The native knowledge of the medical qualities of numbers of plants is extensive and surprising.

The Kaffir treatment of that terrible ailment stone in the bladder alone demands the investigation of medical men. I have known some marvellous cases of rapid cure, the treatment in one case I knew of consisting only of one dose of physic. The patient at the time the Kaffir prescribed for him was and had been for some days suffering terrible agony. The medicine was administered overnight; next morning the stone had been dissolved, and the patient has never since had any symptom of the complaint.

The native treatment for asthma also is wonderfully efficacious. Not the least extraordinary thing about these remedies is their rapidity of action. I was once seized with all the symptoms of a bad attack of fever while travelling in De Kaap. My Kaffir boy went into the bush and collected a bucketful of a small fruit of the wild plum species, instructing me to eat as much as I could of it, and prophesying my speedy recovery. I did as required, and within

three hours all symptoms of illness had left me. What is most remarkable is that all South African fevers leave for a very long time a feeling of weakness and lassitude, even when the attack is diverted as in my case. Yet I felt nothing to suggest that I had been ill. Many white men have such faith in Kaffir remedies, as the result of experience, that they will use no other, and prefer the ministrations of a Kaffir medicine man to those of a qualified practitioner in all cases of what may be termed local ailments. I have spoken with men who have seen Umbandine's wives since my time, and all agree in describing them as girls, though there is not one among them who has not passed well into womanhood.

The same medical skill which preserves the youth of the royal wives is exercised in maintaining the virility of manhood in the King, which in less favoured mortals would soon be impaired. This is also a well-guarded secret, but whatever the medicine used the results cannot be questioned by anyone who has lived in a royal kraal.

There are treasures greater even than gold and precious stones still remaining to be gathered in South Africa, and not the least of them are the marvellous secrets in the art of overcoming the apparent laws of nature and defying change and decay which the Kaffir expert possesses.

There is another subject that has been argued and discussed for years and never adequately

explained. I refer to that extraordinary system of secret telegraphy practised by the Kaffirs. Again and again have Kaffirs reported events hours and even days before the news could possibly have got through by the ordinary channels. I remember, for example, how the Kaffirs in Pretoria detailed the news of the capture of Malaboch at least four hours before the first telegram arrived in Pretoria, and numbers of people who have passed through the experiences of native wars in South Africa have testified to similar instances. It may be that the items of news are shouted from hill to hill, as suggested by some matter-of-fact persons who do not know the Kaffir or his country, but it is passing strange that no white person ever appears to have heard this shouting, not even in districts where every white man understands the Kaffir language as thoroughly as his own. Whatever the true explanation may be, it has not been brought forward yet, and the fact remains that the Kaffirs have some means unknown to whites by which they can transmit intelligence vast distances under conditions that preclude the possibility of their having employed any agency that we are familiar with.

No reference to Kaffir lore would be complete without an allusion to the doll oss, or fetish used by the witch doctors in the practice of divination. Throwing the doll oss is the Kaffir equivalent to consulting the cards, and the farmers largely avail themselves of the passage of a witch doctor

through their district to consult him on lost or stolen cattle, or other doubtful matters.

I was present at Ventersdorp when a Kaffir witch doctor threw the doll oss at the request of my brother to ascertain the whereabouts of a missing cow. He said the animal would be found standing among rocks, with a red calf, some six miles in a southerly direction. My brother went in search, and found the cow in the position described, having with her a calf that had been born since she had strayed. As the Kaffir had come from the north, and the cow was found in a southerly direction, it is hardly probable that he could have seen it himself, and no Kaffir had passed from south to north in the interval. I got him to prophesy for my benefit. He threw the bones, and informed me that before two moons I should prepare to trek north-west, but that just on the point of leaving I should change my mind and trek east, where I should make a lot of money. I had not yet received my appointment as Landdrost of Zeerust, which, as I have already stated, was withdrawn at the last moment, and the Gold Commissionership of De Kaap given me instead. Thus my proposed north-western trek was changed to an eastern direction and the Kaffir's prophecy fulfilled, including that part of it which does not always work out satisfactorily in such predictions—the acquisition of wealth.

The doll oss consists of the vertebræ of a snake, the jointed bones of a sheep's foot, a few

shells, and two or three bits of horn. The witch throws them three times on the ground, and reads from the position they assume the answer required. It is as well to state that in consulting the oracle it is not usual or necessary to tell the witch doctor the nature of your inquiry. It is his business to discover it by his art.

President Kruger has implicit faith in the power of the witch doctor, and I have always been surprised that he never attached a sooth-sayer to the Government. It would be Biblical, but probably his prejudice against the children of Ham would not allow him to raise one of the despised race to so exalted a position. In talking over these things with the President, I found he was well primed with native lore. I was telling him of the egg trick which had been taught me by a Hottentot in the Cape Colony years before. I do not understand how the result is produced, but I do know that by obeying the instructions of my tutor I have only to stand before a fire on which eggs are boiling to prevent their being boiled hard. Nothing is done to either eggs, fire, or water; yet so long as I stand in a certain position those eggs will not be boiled hard. I found the President knew this feat—it cannot be called a trick, as there is no trickery in it—and told me that in the same way he could prevent the proper baking of a sponge cake.

The South African farmer is a firm believer in the supernatural. If he has not had a glimpse of the evidences of another world himself, he is

certain to have a relation who has at some time or another come into contact with the mystic side of things. He believes implicitly that dreams are of divine origin, and allows them to influence his action very considerably. The faith in magic and witchcraft was inherited from the old Cape Colony Boers, who had seen many examples of the extraordinary black magic of the Malays, and to this day the colonial Dutch would go far out of the way to avoid offending a Malay, lest he put them under the baneful influence of his necromantic power.

When at the Paarl a case was reported of a coloured child, the daughter of a Cape Boy, as the half-castes are called, who was said to have pins forced into her flesh by invisible hands, and when in the house articles of furniture would be thrown about the place. I gave instructions that the next time these manifestations occurred I was to be sent for. A few days later a messenger arrived to inform me that the performance was in full swing. Accompanied by my three brothers, I went to the residence of the Cape Boy—a small, bare, one-roomed cottage. We were greeted on our arrival by a piece of dried fish striking my brother in the face. In order to facilitate the detection of trickery, we lit up six candles—an almost electric illumination for so tiny a room. My brother had been considerably annoyed by the action of his invisible assailant, and still believing in some trickery he challenged the thrower to repeat his trick. The reply was a

roll of tobacco, that struck him full in the eye. While a search for the operator was going on, I distinctly saw pins stuck into the upper part of the arms of the girl, who called out with the pain. The next item was the appearance of a burning stump of wood from the fire, which was moved around our feet as if with the object of setting fire to our clothes. No hand or other source of movement was discernible, nor did we feel anything when we circled our hands around the moving brand. When the sheet was snatched from the bed, and everybody in the room was flogged with it, my brothers concluded that the thing was too uncanny, and left, I following their example, very much astonished.

Next day a Hottentot witch doctor was sent for, and acquainted with what we had seen. He went to the cottage, performed certain incantations, and assured us that within a very short time the person who had brought about these disturbances would come and confess. Less than an hour later a bastard Hottentot arrived, running fast; he had come from a distance of six miles in response to an impulse. He told us that he had caused the bewitchment through the medium of certain medicine he had bought from a Malay. His motive was revenge on the girl, who was the subject of these manifestations. She was employed on the same farm as the Hottentot, and had reported him to his employer for stealing wine.

I have no explanation to offer for this story. Numbers of Colonials of the highest probity and

rectitude narrate experiences not less, but often more, surprising.

Among the curios in possession of Umbandine were two which interested me. The first was a royal ox, a small Kaffir animal no larger than a Kerry cow, but carrying a pair of horns which I measured and found to be nine feet from tip to tip. They were so heavy that a Kaffir had to stand on each side to support them when the animal was feeding. The other curiosity was the royal correspondence cabinet. It was a pillow-case. When a letter was received and duly read by the Secretary, Umbandine rolled it into a ball and threw it into the bag. How he found it again in case of after reference I do not know, but fortunately time is cheap in a Kaffir kraal. I have mentioned that Umbandine grew very stout. He was the fattest Kaffir I have ever seen, and weighed over twenty-seven stone. His height was six feet, so that the impression he created was quite that of some legendary giant—an ebony Colossus.

The natives in the De Kaap district were in the early days of the white invasion remarkably free from the vices of immorality and dishonesty. I have seen an Induna, accompanied by two Kaffirs, carrying on a tray a pocket knife they had picked up, and taking it round the camp to find the owner. Five years later the Kaffirs were thieves, drunkards, and liars, and chastity the exception among their women. It is such experiences as these that make the white man who

knows the Kaffir character opposed to the civilising theories which obtain pretty widely at home.

I shall have occasion to mention later on an instance of President Kruger's attitude towards the natives in the case of an old Kaffir who had an important secret to impart.

On leaving the Executive Council Chamber one day we were surprised to hear something that had been unknown in the city since the English occupation—a brass band, which was playing outside the main entrance—and still more astonished to find that the performers were Kaffirs, dressed in a very neat, semi-military uniform. As the President left the building the leader approached, and speaking in very good Dutch informed the President that the band was composed of natives of the tribe of the Chief Magato, who had had them taught by European instructors, that this was their first public performance, and had been arranged by their Chief, who had sent them all the way to Pretoria that the President of the Transvaal might hear their first effort. The President listened with impatience, made no reply, but cracked a weak joke on the martial appearance of the Kaffirs, and passed on. The natives were naturally crestfallen at this snub, and felt it none the less because no provision had been made for their entertainment. I felt very indignant at the un-called-for conduct of the President, and my anger was shared by Mr. T. W. Beckett, the Pretoria

merchant, who took the band to his house, where he entertained them and they entertained in return. Thus they were saved from having to pass the night in the jail and being lashed in the morning for having no passes.

It was about this time that Mr. Koos Smit, who became Railway Commissioner, but was then Landdrost of Pretoria, made the first attack on Cape coloured people, which, at a later day, became one of the grievances in the Uitlanders' indictment of Transvaal injustice. One night about thirty Cape Boys and fifty or sixty Cape girls were enjoying themselves at a dance, when they were all arrested and locked up for the night, while on their being taken before Smit the next day, he sentenced every one of them to a flogging, irrespective of sex, and the sentence was actually carried out, although all the victims produced evidence that they were out with the permission of their masters. Smit was an illiterate man, and had been taken straight from his farm and made chief magistrate.

When the post of Railway Commissioner was created the President offered it to me, but although I had had sixteen years' experience of railway work, I did not feel qualified to accept the office, especially as the first duty required of the Commissioner would be to attend the Railway Conference at Lisbon. The office was accepted by Mr. Smit, who proceeded directly he was appointed to Lisbon to attend a conference of railway experts and discuss with them abstruse points of

railway management. The train in which he had travelled to Capetown was the first he had seen, and long after he had been appointed to his office Mr. Smit was more ignorant of railway matters than the Minister of Mines was of mining. No other comparison can convey an idea of the depth of his ignorance.

Mr. Smit was a great friend of the Hollanders, and has been instrumental in placing many of them in snug billets. I remember meeting a young Hollander at this time, when his countrymen were swarming in and getting the best billets in Pretoria. He was one of the newly arrived office seekers, and he expressed to me his surprise and indignation that he should have been in the capital actually three days, and that as yet the Government had made him no offer of employment. One of these gentlemen succeeded to the Landdrostship of the Kantoor on my retirement, and at a very early stage provided subject for a good joke. The court was conducted on the most rudimentary principles, so far as formality and furniture went. Some wag pointed out to the new Landdrost that a great blunder had been perpetrated by me, his predecessor. There was no box for the prisoner in the court, and it was explained to the Hollander that as the prisoner was always referred to as the "prisoner in the box," if he was not in a box the conviction must fall to the ground through informality. My successor was not going to take any risks; a gin case was hunted

up and placed in the centre of the floor of the court, and in that all prisoners or civil defendants had to stand before the business was proceeded with.

I have already said that the increase of the population and the general advancement of Barberton and the entire Fields were pronounced. Not only were they supplying three-fourths of the revenue of the State, but they were enriching everybody connected with them to a degree that soon became a matter of public comment. Naturally enough office seekers began to suggest to the Government the advisability of creating fresh billets there, and I was not surprised to find that my office in particular, being now the most lucrative outside Pretoria, became an object of envy. I had all along to contend against the prejudice existing against Englishmen, and my very name soon became a source of irritation, for I was not only an Englishman, but was not a burgher, and as such was a fitting subject for attack. Two prominent Raad members had long cast their envious eyes upon my office, and a campaign of freezing-out began, which I regarded with equanimity. My accounts were carefully overhauled and had to be reported correct. My decisions in important cases affecting the ownership of valuable claims had stood the test of High Court revision, so the attacking party laid complaint that I was personally interested in gold claims and other similar interests.

A Commission of Inquiry was appointed, and the Chief Inspector came down to the Kantoor to look into matters. I showed him all that was worth seeing, and before he returned to Pretoria he was interested in several claims. His report to the Government was satisfactory, at least to me. A little later a second Commission was appointed. The Commissioner came, saw, and was conquered by the opportunity for waxing rich without effort. His report confirmed the first. The attack was renewed again, when General Joubert and General Smit came down to look into things. They did not visit me at the Kantoor, but went through to Barberton, where they held their inquiry without my assistance. On their return they stayed at my house, where I was able to congratulate them on having invested £1,000 in the Barberton district. Their report was as satisfactory as those that had preceded it, and, having secured a favourable recognition of my services from the Government, I resigned my office a few months later, and proceeded on my first visit to Europe, by way of preparation for the second chapter in my experiences of Transvaal politics.

CHAPTER VIII.

The suspicious Boer and the causes that made him distrustful
—Boers and banking—Mrs. Erasmus insists on counting her
money—Treasures in private houses—Comparative rarity of
gold robberies—The Close Murder.

MUCH capital has been made by writers of that characteristic caution which in many cases becomes an unreasoning distrust of strangers, and is often carried to a ridiculous point. It is only fair to remind these critics that the condition of life of the old farmer was one which necessitated a constant alertness. Every bush or stone might conceal a savage animal, or still more savage native, and the rifle was always kept at full cock. When the farmer settled down he was brought into contact with aliens, who were for the most part runaway soldiers or sailors, and adventurers of a type that reflected little credit on the country of which they claimed to be representatives. It was the commonest thing for a farmer to entertain strangers with such hospitality as his poor place afforded, and awake next morning to learn that his guest had decamped with the best horse in the stable. This prejudice against travellers on foot exists to this day, and the invariable question put to the child or Kaffir who announces the coming of a stranger is, "Is he on horse or on foot?" If the latter, it will be useless for the visitor to expect hospitality.

Some of the robberies perpetrated upon unsuspecting and hospitable farmers have been peculiarly atrocious. I recall one such instance. A Jew smouser or pedlar met with an accident near the place of a farmer of my acquaintance, who took him in, and had him nursed by his family for nearly three months. When he had become well enough to travel the Jew expressed his gratitude for the kindnesses shown him, and asked what he had to pay. The farmer refused to accept any payment, upon which the Jew insisted that he must make some return, and by way of compromise suggested that the farmer should buy for £30 a watch, which, he said, cost £40 at a wholesale price. The farmer agreed, and paid £30 for the watch. A few weeks later he found it necessary to take it to the watchmakers, when he learned that he could be supplied with as many of the same article as he desired at fifteen shillings apiece. Stories like this circulate widely and become traditions, and the Boer does not forget them when face to face with the stranger too anxious to effect a deal.

The following story illustrates how this distrust of strangers is carried out to a ridiculous degree. There is a family in the Transvaal possessing a good Hollander name, but little else. Some years ago information was brought them that a large sum of money had reverted to the head of their family, as the next-of-kin of a wealthy relative who had died in Holland. They paid little heed to the tidings. Holland was so far

away, and Hollanders such slim people, that they were afraid of having any dealings with them. I had heard the story, and on my visit to Europe I made a point of inquiring into the matter, when I found the report correct, and the handing over the accumulated funds only a matter of signing certain formal documents in proof of identity, etc. I reported this to the lucky heirs, but they received it with absolute incredulity. When I had satisfied them of the genuineness of the business, they urged objections, and expressed their fear of being defrauded in the handing over of the money. They deferred action on various pretexts, and to this day the money—a very large sum—is in the hands of the executors, who show no anxiety to compel the heirs to become rich against their wills.

The story of Mrs. Erasmus and her £110,000 is another extraordinary example of Boer distrust. She was the widow of one of the wealthiest farmers in the Transvaal, and sold two or three farms to a financial house for £110,000 cash. It was arranged that she was to receive the money at the National Bank, Pretoria, and thither she journeyed, taking with her a hand-bag to hold the money. When the cheque was presented to her, she firmly refused to have anything to do with a piece of paper; nothing but the gold would satisfy her. The manager took her to the strong room, and showed her gold far in excess of her claim, but she was obdurate, and demanded that it be paid over the counter to her. There

was no help for it but to comply, so a bagful of sovereigns was poured out on the counter, and the old lady began to count it in her primitive fashion. Hour after hour went slowly by, but very little progress had been made. By the time the Bank doors were closed, Mrs. Erasmus had got through a little over £1,000. The manager explained that by the rules of the Bank she must now leave, but this she refused to do until she had got all her money ; someone had warned her against being put off with part on account, and if she left with the few hundred she had been able to count she might be defrauded out of the balance. At length the manager sent for Mr. T. W. Beckett, a well-known merchant, dealing largely with the farmers, and with infinite pains and difficulty he tried to explain to her the rudimentary principles of banking. It was all of no effect, so, as the only method of getting the old lady to quit the Bank, Mr. Beckett gave her his personal guarantee to pay her the money next day, and this she accepted in preference to the security of the National Bank.

A Johannesburg Syndicate were negotiating for the purchase of a farm in the Ventersdorp district. The owner asked—as Boers often will, out of sheer inability to realise the magnitude of large figures—a preposterous sum. Without commenting on the unreasonableness of the figure, the financier proposed that the amount to be accepted should be as much gold and silver coin as would lie on a certain table in the room.

The suggestion was readily agreed to, and the financier emptied about £12,000 in silver and gold on to the table. This the farmer accepted, and the purchaser got his farm at less than a quarter of the figure originally named.

The distrust of banks and their methods is not confined to Mrs. Erasmus. Many farmers persistently refuse to have dealings with bankers, and keep their wealth in their house and under their eyes. I once called upon a farmer named Van Wyk, who had sold farms to Johannesburg Syndicates for sums aggregating £100,000. On approaching the house I was surprised to find it surrounded by a grating formed of nine-inch deals placed on end, six inches apart. The gate was a ponderous affair, and locked and bolted with considerable ingenuity. The sound of my cart wheels brought Van Wyk to the door, armed with his rifle. He deliberated about opening the outer gate, as I was accompanied by a young man whom he did not know. At last he admitted us to the sitting-room. On the table was a large japanned box containing over £100,000 in gold and notes, and by each side of it lay a loaded revolver. The old man seated himself opposite the box, and we proceeded to light our pipes. My companion stretched his hand out to help himself in Boer fashion to the tobacco in Van Wyk's pouch, which was lying near the cash box. In an instant the old man was upon his feet, covering the youth with both revolvers. I succeeded in calming the old fellow and persuading him

that my friend had no designs on the cash box, but Van Wyk did not let go his revolver till we had departed.

In the Standerton district there is, or there was a few years ago, a Boer who had disposed of his farm for a large sum. Instead of spending money in erecting a grating round his house he simply took to the caves, and compensated for the loss of interest on his treasure by reducing his living expenses to the minimum. He wore a blanket like a Kaffir, and adopted the ways of life of the child of nature.

One of the most remarkable facts connected with these treasure conservers is that no attempt ever has been made to relieve them of the responsibility of guarding so much wealth. At least I have never heard of a case, and I know of farmers who, between them, keep cash in their houses to a total of half a million.

The average Boer finds it difficult to comprehend how a banker can be so philanthropic as not only to take charge of a man's money for nothing, but actually pay him for the privilege of guarding it. Paper money they can understand, for, in the early days of the struggle with impending bankruptcy, notes were issued by the Government for sums ranging from a sovereign to threepence, and many an old farmer has heard the story of how President Kruger brought off one of his first *coups* by buying up the Government greenbacks, as the £1 notes were called, after circulating, or at least not denying, the

popular rumour that they were valueless. A pound of coffee was the recognised exchange value of a pound note, and when the British took over the country these pieces of paper were redeemed at full face value. This the farmer can understand, but cheques and bank drafts are a trifle beyond the farmer, who cannot even comprehend why he cannot get rice, sugar or coffee at the Bank.

In one Transvaal district a number of farmers held their farms on a small rental payable to the Government, and this at regular intervals they would journey to Pretoria to pay in cash. As the amounts rarely exceeded three or four pounds, and the journey occupied as many days, I suggested to one farmer that if he gave me the money I would transmit it to Pretoria by cheque. He did not like to say that he mistrusted me, so reluctantly handed over the three pounds, which I paid to the Treasurer-General by my private cheque. In due course I received the formal receipt for the remittance, and gave it to the farmer. The receipt was indisputable evidence of my power to do as I claimed, and within a few days the fame of the transaction was noised abroad, and many a farmer came to me, introducing his business by intimating that he had heard of me as a man who could "send money to Pretoria without sending it." The feat was regarded as only a degree less than marvellous.

It is necessary to remark that this ignorance was confined to the Transvaal Boers; those

among whom I had been born in the Colony, and even those of the Free State, were quite alive to the scope and convenience of modern banking methods, and knew fully how to avail themselves of them. One of the keenest share-brokers and dealers I have met was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at the Paarl. He conducted much of his business in the vestry, and a deal I had with him once cost me several thousand pounds. It is only fair to say that he was a marked exception to the rule, and when the nature of his business came out he was promptly called to order and repudiated by the other ministers of the Church.

When one recalls the temptation that has been thrown in the way of the desperado to make big hauls of the most negotiable form of plunder—actual cash and bar gold—it is little short of surprising that robberies were so rare. When at the Kantoer I regularly remitted to the Government at Pretoria thousands of pounds in cash and gold, trusting the valuable consignment to the guardianship of a Hottentot who carried the mail both ways on a pack horse. Every man in the camp knew when the boy left and what he carried. His route lay through desolate portions of the country, where an army might be engaged without anyone else being the wiser; yet no attempt at robbery was made, nor did a letter or a sixpence ever miscarry.

The same immunity can be reported with respect to the collection of the hut tax. The

native Commissioner, attended by a small Kaffir escort, went at intervals to the districts inhabited by Kaffirs, to collect the hut tax of 10s. per hut, which amounted in the aggregate to many thousands of pounds. It would have been the simplest thing possible for three or four resolute men to have "stuck up" the party while camping out on the return journey. The only real difficulty would have consisted in getting out of the country before the hue and cry had been raised, though in those pre-telegraph days even that would not have been a serious obstacle to men who knew the roads. Before I scared away the loafers from the Kantoor there were several half-hearted attempts at highway robbery, and three times I was "held up" on the road when I was supposed to be carrying a large amount of cash or gold; but as I was always armed, and prepared for attack, nothing serious came of it.

The Close murder is one of the traditions of the Kantoor which came into being during my Commissionership, and is worth telling, as it illustrates not only the impotence of the Government to protect the individual, but the extent to which the burgher was guarded and shielded from the due reward of his crimes.

There arrived at the Kantoor from Natal a gentleman named Close, who had secured from the Transvaal Government one of those concessions which, if persisted in, would have made De Kaap the preserve of a few favoured in-

dividuals. Close inspected his acquisition under my guidance, and prepared to go through to Pretoria to pay his licence and other fees. He had upon him, to my knowledge, £800 in gold, and I have reason for believing that he carried even more. It was reported to me that he had engaged a cart and horses from a man named Goetzee, who was to drive him to Pretoria. This Goetzee was one of five brothers, Boers, who had an evil reputation as bandits, cattle thieves, and rascals generally. I immediately sought out Close, told him what I knew of the character of the man who was to drive him, and did my utmost to persuade him to abandon the journey. But he was obdurate, expressing the fullest confidence in his ability to take care of himself, showing me his revolver and a hundred cartridges. He left with Goetzee in a spider and two horses next day, and as he drove away I remarked to the bystanders, "That's the last we shall see of poor Close."

A few days later a rumour came to the Kantoor that Close had shot himself on Goetzee's farm, near Middelburg. Suspecting foul play, I promptly instituted inquiries which, put together, formed a consecutive narrative to the following effect:—

The first night Close and Goetzee outspanned at the farm of one Maré, a brother to Jacob Maré, my early friend. Close had been drinking heavily on the road, and as he showed Mrs. Maré his pocket-book, containing some £700 or

£800, she strongly advised him to remain and not continue the journey. She felt certain that foul play was premeditated, because Goetzee had been joined by his brother, who had followed in another trap.

Two days later Goetzee arrived in Middelburg with a portmanteau and revolver and ninety-nine cartridges, saying they belonged to an Englishman he was driving, who had suddenly sprung from the spider and blown his brains out. The Field Cornet proceeded to the spot, and found the body of Close within a few yards of the house of Goetzee, a solitary dwelling in the veldt. A bullet had entered the back of the head and emerged from the forehead. The body had been stripped of all valuables, and, having satisfied himself that there was nothing left on the corpse, the Government official's duty was concluded.

Goetzee was not even arrested; his version of the business was accepted, and the incident closed for a time. The widow came up from Natal, and devoted considerable time and money to an effort to bring the murderer to justice, but without avail. The Goetzees were men of influence with the Transvaal Government. The driver was the same Goetzee who, within an hour of the departure of Colonel Anstruther and the 94th Regiment from Middelburg to the fatal Bronkhorst Spruit, locked up the magistrate and took possession of the town for the Boers. The brothers used to boast that they could

do what they liked, and they acted upon this belief.

I knew much more of the business than it would have been prudent for me to disclose at the time, but after I left the Transvaal I prepared affidavits and sent them to Dr. Leyds, then State Attorney. He had Goetzee arrested, but as soon as the brothers heard of it they proceeded to Pretoria, and demanded his release. The Government yielded without delay, and from that day to this the Goetzees have never been troubled. A record, however brief, of similar crimes committed in the Transvaal during the past twenty years would "stagger humanity," and probably secure for the most matter-of-fact and careful compiler the character of a prolific romanticist.

Another tragedy that excited a little more than usual interest was the murder of an inoffensive and respectable old digger. He was found in his tent on his claim battered to death, and his valuables, including a good quantity of nuggets, gone. Suspicion fell upon his Kaffir servant, who had disappeared, and was known to be lurking about the mountains, but the desperate character of the fellow deterred any white man from endeavouring to bring him to justice. For the first time in the history of the Fields, the Government displayed sufficient interest in the diggers to offer a reward of £20 for the capture of the Kaffir. A Basuto undertook the task. Armed with a bottle of morphia-dosed brandy, he went out

into the mountains, made the acquaintance of the outlaw, and, when confidence was sufficiently established, he produced the bottle from its hiding-place, got the Kaffir to drink and sleep, then tied him securely, and came into the camp for help. The Kaffir was tried and hanged, but the Basuto never got the promised reward. The Government said it did not pay rewards to Kaffirs.

CHAPTER IX.

The passing of the Gold Law—First experiences of the Raad—The President in a rage—My likeness to the Dynamite King—Its advantages and otherwise—The Raad Member as he was—His manners and customs—His love of free entertainment—Daily routine of a Raadsled—The President's morning lessons—The Third Raad and its work—The jam concession.

My first intimate acquaintance with the Raad was brought about by the necessity for my close attendance during the discussion on the Gold Law, of which I was practically the author, and in which I naturally took a very keen interest. Up to the publication of this Gold Law, my work had necessarily been both difficult, and, to myself, unsatisfactory. As the population of the Fields increased, and the rivalry grew keener, new and puzzling points were continually cropping up. I had no precedents to guide me, so I was compelled to take each case on its merits, and lay down my law as points arose. I believe my rough and ready system of administering mining law was based on equity; certainly it gave pretty general satisfaction to the diggers, and I have the additional gratification of being able to say what few judges of first instance can—that I never had a decision reversed by the High Court. Furthermore, the principles and rules of practice I instituted have been adopted and remain in the

present very much amended code of gold laws. It is generally accepted by authorities that the Transvaal Mining Law is a model of what such laws ought to be, and though there are still several serious flaws and omissions in it, and the original broadly conceived piece of legislation has been amended and altered very much in favour of the capitalists rather than of the poor man, the praise bestowed upon it seems fully justified.

During the discussions on the measure in the Raad—there was no Second Raad in those days—I was in close attendance, and it was while following the debates that I gained my first insight into the dark and devious ways of Pretoria diplomacy.

I well remember that one of my first visits to the Raad gave me an opportunity of witnessing the President in his role of supreme autocrat. Mention has already been made of a formal resolution always passed at the prorogation of the Raad, conferring on the President absolute power to act as he deemed best during the interregnum. At the time this resolution was brought on his Honour was not in the Chamber. By some misunderstanding or error, the explanation of which I have forgotten, this resolution was rejected. A few minutes later the President entered, and inquired of the Chairman what had been done. On hearing that the resolution had been rejected, he sprang to his feet, waved his arms frantically, and literally roared. I had often heard it said that when angry he roared like a lion; no other

simile would properly fit the case. He declared that the Raad had purposely and outrageously insulted him, and with a threat to resign—his favourite method of bringing the Raad to reason—he tore off his green sash of office, and kicked it from the platform to the floor of the Raad. Several members rushed towards him, endeavouring to appease him, and prevent his leaving the Chamber for ever. He shook them off with such force that two of them went staggering to the end of the platform. After several minutes of pleading and expostulation by the members, the Chairman took advantage of the stroke of noon to adjourn the Raad. The members flocked to the President's private room, where apologies and promises of better behaviour restored the President to good humour. The Raad reassembled at two o'clock ; the rejected motion was put first on the order paper, and carried unanimously. I understood for the first time what President Kruger meant by always speaking of *my* Raad, *my* Burghers. He possessed them in every sense of the word, as I soon had ample and frequent opportunity of realising.

Later on I became an habitu   of the Raad-zaal, and a likeness I was supposed to bear to Mr. Lippert, the Dynamite Concessionaire, on more than one occasion proved a convenient passport to semi-private functions, where my presence was never challenged. I have frequently been amused on entering the Raad to observe members telegraphing to each other the supposed

arrival of the all-powerful Dynamite King, and on two or three occasions the President has himself been a victim of the illusion, and started a conversation or made a statement intended for the ear of Lippert alone. These blunders grew less frequent as my attendance at the Government building became more regular, but up to very recent times I have been the recipient of the obsequious homage intended for my double.

I need scarcely say that this odd coincidence has been the means of putting me on the track of many a pretty piece of business that would otherwise have been a source of mystery to me. The late Stoffel Tosen on one occasion let me into an interesting secret regarding his connection with dynamite company shares, given him for services rendered by the person for whom he mistook me. I fear it would be idle to pretend that I did not enjoy these blunders, though doubtless the compliment implied was decidedly equivocal.

On one occasion this supposed resemblance nearly cost me my life. I was at the Klein Letaba Goldfields on business, when I was accosted by a miner who brought certain charges against me of having wronged him in a mining transaction. It was not till several heads had been broken by a bottle wielded by the miner and aimed at me, that it occurred to me to ask whom he took me for. He replied "Lippert," and the mystery was revealed. I noticed, and it was a subject of general remark, that this resemblance

to Lippert was dependent upon my degree of untidiness, and the more glaring blunders were made when I arrived at Pretoria dirty and travel-stained.

It was during these early visits to the Raad that I learned many of the hidden ways of Pretorian diplomacy; for the average Raad member is by no means adverse to letting his friends share his secrets, once he has turned them to profitable account. This is why a history of inner Pretoria does not tempt any writer; like the chapter on snakes in Ireland, it could be comprised in the brief bold statement that there are no secrets in Pretoria. A secret ceases to be one when it is known to several persons, and there were few frauds perpetrated at the seat of Government that were not known to scores.

I remember once being much amused by a comment by the reviewer of a work on some South African notoriety. The author had claimed for his hero connection with some very shady transaction. This excited the incredulity of the reviewer, who proceeded to betray his ignorance of Transvaal men and manners by denouncing the story as a base invention, because, said he, had it been true the subject of it would have taken care to keep it secret. As a matter of fact, the story was not only told by the subject of it, but gloried in. I have known a member of the Raad come from the Chamber and, in the presence of several people, declare that he had sold So-and-So by taking money to vote for him, and voting on the

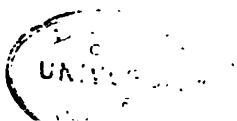
opposite side. It is difficult to get the stranger to realise that not only does the Raad member look upon his membership as a legitimate lever for enriching himself, but his constituents see nothing wrong in it either. On the contrary, a Raadsled who failed to turn his position to monetary account would be regarded as an incompetent, helpless sort of individual. There were many Burghers who entertained this idea of Mr. Loveday, the able and straightforward member for Barberton, in the First Raad. He had not taken advantage of his opportunity for amassing wealth; therefore he must have been destitute of ability. With this spirit so universal, it was not surprising that the frequent exposures of bribery, fraud, and general corruption on the part of Raad members caused no feeling of disgust or even disapproval among the Burghers. Their members had only done what they would do under similar circumstances.

I was once discussing the subject of bribery with a distinguished Transvaal judge. "Bribery," said he, "is only wrong when its object is to induce a person to commit a wrong. For example, if I give a policeman a sovereign to keep an extra vigilant guard on my house I am not bribing him; I have merely given him an incentive to be more zealous in his duty." This explanation had the hearty approval of all Raad members.

The pay of Raadsleden at the time I was initiated into Pretorian politics was 30s. per

day, later increased to £3, but by serving on committees the fees would augment the daily stipend by thrice that sum. If, as frequently happened, a member contrived to get on to three or four committees, he could earn as much as £5 per day. I have known members to be on four committees at the same time, and considerable arrangement was sometimes necessary to enable them to be present at all of them when the roll was called, for absence from Roll Call, both in the Raad and on Committee, deprived a member of that day's pay.

Probably there was no more regularly and punctually attended Parliament in the world than that at Pretoria, and surely there were no legislators who lived more economically while carrying on their duties. When I was first at Pretoria the members for the most part lived in their tents and waggons outspanned on the Church Square, under conditions very little different from their life when trekking over the veldt. Some of the members who did not bring their families with them, or who provided for them in other ways, would take a room and live four and six together, providing their own food, the bulk of which they would bring with them in the shape of biltong, or sun-dried strips of beef or venison, and sacks of mealies and Boer meal. Even to the last, many members of the Raad lived during the session in this squalid, thrifty manner. They spent nothing in luxuries, regarding it as the privilege and duty of favour-



seekers—with whom Pretoria always swarmed while the Raad was in session—to keep them supplied with liquor and cigars, or any other luxury they might fancy. No Raadsled would have deemed it beneath his dignity to invite a person to whom he had been introduced to “stand him a drink,” and there were members of the Raad, free drinkers in every sense of the word, who had never been known to drink at their own expense.

I was one of the stewards of the first Agricultural Show held at Pretoria, and was frequently amused by the sight of rows of Raad members standing on bricks and hanging on to the corrugated iron fence to obtain a free view of the proceedings, rather than pay the admission fee of 2s. Not even a judgment visited upon one of these parsimonious legislators had the customary deterrent effect of such visitations. He was hanging on with hands and chin when one of the three bricks which formed his fragile platform slipped, and the Raadsled, a seventeen stone man, fell with his jaw on the sharp edge of the sheet iron fencing. The jerk not only made him a silent member of the Raad for a week, but caused his pipe to fall inside the grounds. Not a whit abashed, the member went to the entrance, and requested one of the committee men to find and restore it. Meanwhile the Kaffirs were imitating the example of the legislators and erecting brick platforms; but the policemen

marched round with a rattan and cleared them off, the privilege of a free view being the right of a Raad member only.

The life of a Raadsled, or member of the Raad, during the session was as much a matter of routine as that of a soldier. He rose often before the sun, drank his coffee, and proceeded to the residence of the President, where he was generally in time to be present at the devotional service with which his Honour always began the day. Devotions over, coffee was brought in, pipes lighted, and the President began his course of instruction as to how he desired his members to vote during the day. I have been present on more than one occasion at these morning instructions, when the President has coolly directed those present to vote in a certain way, excusing himself from giving his reasons on the ground that the subject was one of such importance that he could not in the interest of the State disclose further particulars. I do not remember having heard of this dictation being resented by any member, for there were few who would have had the courage to oppose the will of the President. I have heard him declare that they were to vote as directed in spite of anything he might say to the contrary in the Raad. Thus the cunning diplomatist frequently got credit with the *Uitlander* for throwing his personal influence on the side opposed to the vote of the Raad. Again and again has the *Star*, the organ of the *Uitlander*, given the President credit for

sympathies he did not possess, and many a concession-hunter has been hoodwinked by this double cunning of the President, who, while appearing to perform his promise to support a particular motion, has taken care that his public utterances shall not influence his pre-arranged intentions in the matter.

At these conferences it was usual to find one or more representatives of that influential body of plotters and plunderers appropriately nicknamed the Third Raad. This secret organisation, which has been the means of enriching itself and the relatives and favoured ones of President Kruger, consisted of the following recognised members: Frikkie Eloff, son-in-law of the President; C. Schutte, Landdrost of Pretoria; Commandant Hendrik Schoeman; Commandant Grobler; Commandant Potgieter—all old and close friends of the President; and the notorious Solomon Gillingham, a Colonial of Irish extraction, who carries on a lucrative business in Pretoria as a baker and confectioner. It is safe to assert that no concession, and indeed no piece of legislation likely to bring profit to any individual could be ensured safe passage through the Raad without the consent and assistance, active or passive, of this powerful and unscrupulous body. There was no false delicacy or concealment of motive about their procedure. Before a concession-seeker had been an hour in Pretoria he would be called upon by one of the Third Raad members and given plainly to

understand that they required an interest in his project, and he would be either very innocent or very foolish if he ignored their claims. Nothing was too small for their consideration. Had the victim come merely to collect an account justly due from the Government, its prompt or tardy settlement was in the hands of the Third Raad. I have known a paltry account of under £40, due for the insertion of official advertisements in an obscure local paper, delayed and objected to until the unfortunate newspaper proprietor agreed to hand over a third of the sum to this iniquitous combination, though the victim of this blackmail profited by being initiated into the art of swelling his charges to admit of his paying a more liberal tax to these self-constituted middlemen. Nothing was too big or difficult to be undertaken and success guaranteed.

While a well-known case was pending in the High Court about not long ago, a member of the Third Raad had the audacity to approach one of the litigants and guarantee judgment in his favour on payment of £50,000. The prospect of the decision being an adverse one was regarded by the litigant and his advisers as too improbable to be seriously entertained, yet, to the amazement of every disinterested lawyer in the country, judgment was given for the other side.

My first personal experience of the power of the Third Raad is worth narrating, as it is not only a very fair sample of its methods, but also of those of the Pretoria Government. Tenders

had been asked for for a contract to water the streets of Pretoria. I sent in one, as did the Pretoria Waterworks Company, whose tender was considerably below mine, and was accordingly accepted. An hour or two later a representative of the Third Raad called upon me and stated that he was empowered to make me an offer, which was to the following effect:— I was to write immediately to the Government, offer to do the work for £3,000 per annum, and pay the Third Raad £600 a year. As my rejected tender was only £1,750, I was naturally sceptical as to this second offer being entertained, particularly as the matter had been closed and the tender of the Waterworks Company accepted. I expressed my doubts as to the utility of renewing an offer, but was told that the matter rested with the Third Raad, who had power to do as they pleased.

My original tender had required me to supply my own plant, but the amended one carried with it the very important advantage of the free use of the Government plant, which Landdrost Schutte undertook to place at my disposal. The offer was submitted to the Government, and next day I received formal notice that it had been accepted. The Waterworks Company were informed at the same time that their accepted tender had been cancelled. The Company immediately applied to the Court for an injunction, and the Government wrote asking me to withdraw my tender, promising to compensate me in some other way.

The influence of individual members of the Third Raad has been exemplified many a time by the ease with which they have secured lucrative concessions without apparent effort, and always free from any reciprocal obligation on the part of the concessionaire. In fact, the infamous monopolies granted by James II. to his favourites were legitimate and beneficial in comparison, for they were rarely given, except for a consideration in cash, or service of some value.

The much-quoted Gillingham Jam Concession may be cited as probably the most outrageous attempt on the part of an individual to batten on a community that history has any record of. I have mentioned that Gillingham carried on business as a baker and confectioner, and it was in the private office of his bakery that the principal meetings of the Third Raad were generally held. The President was a frequent visitor there, and I have many a time seen his Honour standing at the counter of the little shop in early days helping himself to sweets. Whether it was that the President felt he owed Gillingham some return for the sweetmeats he had indulged in free of cost, I know not; let it suffice that presently an innocent-looking motion came before the Raad, strongly supported by the President. It proposed to grant to one Solomon Gillingham, of Pretoria, the exclusive right to manufacture jam in the Transvaal. His Honour threw a sop to the farmers by suggesting

that the encouragement of a jam industry would afford them a ready market for the fruit they were supposed to grow, but whose quantity has never yet been one-twentieth of the total amount needed to supply the Johannesburg market.

Among other incidental trifles in the concession to which his Honour did not think it necessary to refer was a clause giving Gillingham the exclusive right, not only to manufacture—which he had no intention of doing—but to import every kind of sweetmeat, biscuit, and confectionery. It was the most liberal concession ever framed, for there were no obligations of any kind required from the concessionaire, who, by a paragraph of a few lines, was given supreme and indisputable right to insist that the population of the Transvaal should eat no confectionery that had not passed through his hands.

How preposterously unfair and one-sided the agreement was may be imagined when it is known that the Second Raad—no sticklers for equity when concessions were concerned—refused to sanction it. Immediately on learning that the motion had been rejected by the Second Raad, the President rushed off to the First Raad, stormed and threatened to resign unless this corner-stone was established in the State, and got it passed. On being again presented to the Second Raad it was rejected by a majority of two, and the Third Raad suffered its only defeat. It is estimated by persons in the trade that, had

the concession gone through as intended, Gillingham would have been a millionaire long ere this, while the loss to the State by the suspension of duty on sweetmeats and confectionery imported by Gillingham would have been enormous. In spite of the outburst of popular indignation, the subject was again brought before the Raad next year, and only defeated by one vote.

When the Third Raad member boasted to me that his confederacy could do as it liked with the Government I not unnaturally ascribed it to an attempt to impress me with the ability of that body to carry out its undertaking ; and though I was surprised at the ease with which they got the Government to accept my contract, I was still disposed to under-estimate the power of the Third Raad. The circumstance I am about to relate, however, removed any doubt as to the immense influence of that body, and proved to me the absurdity of endeavouring to fight against it.

I had for some time had reason to believe that important documents supposed to be in the custody of the State Secretary were either shown to certain members of the Third Raad, or that copies of them were made and supplied to them. I put private detectives at work, and was satisfied that a confidential clerk in the office of Dr. Leyds was the culprit. I knew the hour and place at which he handed in his stolen information, and the price he was paid for his treachery. Being anxious to catch the member of the Third Raad

who was the instigator in the act, I proceeded very carefully, and took the State Attorney, Mr. Ewald Esselen, into my confidence. He entered heartily into the matter, and supplied me with Kaffir detectives. A day or two later Dr. Leyds, State Secretary, called upon me and expressed his great satisfaction at the prospect of detecting the culprit, remarking that he would effect his object at any cost. Directly afterwards my spies informed me that the clerk had ceased his customary visits to the residence of the Third Raad member. We waited and watched for several days longer, but in vain.

Later on a relative of the suspected clerk asked me why I had been watching his friend. "How do you know I have been doing anything of the kind?" I asked. "Oh, Dr. Leyds called him into his office and told him to be careful, as you were watching him," was the reply. That clerk remained in his position, and Dr. Leyds never showed any anxiety to know more particulars as to the use the members of the Third Raad made of his confidential documents.

CHAPTER X.

Kruger's indifference to the agricultural interest—Story of the Rustenburg Railway route—Nelmapius and his work—Kruger's wealth in cash and land—His salary paid in gold—His meanness as a contributor to charities—The Boers never likely to support a national movement by money—Kruger and his travelling expenses—Charge proved by *Land en Volk*—Boers' short way with Kaffirs—Kruger's "loyalty" to his friends.

IF I were asked to name the most striking characteristics of Paul Kruger they would be selfishness and indifference to the interests of his country as distinct from the interest of the individual. I could cite scores of instances illustrative of this last-named trait, but as there is a painful similarity between all of them, two or three will suffice. I have mentioned the extraordinarily hostile attitude assumed by the ex-President towards the gold industry; this policy was maintained to the end.

I was once discussing this subject with an intelligent Boer, and regretting that the President should be the champion of so short-sighted a course of action. "What about agriculture?" asked the farmer. "Can you tell me any one thing that the President has done for the special benefit of the very class whose interests he is always pretending to regard as his peculiar care?" On the contrary, I knew well many acts of his which were distinctly inimical to the

agricultural interest. Take the case of the proposed railway from Rustenburg to the Rand. This project had for its object the opening up of the rich and only partially developed agricultural district of Rustenburg, in the north-west of the Transvaal. The cheapest and most direct route to the Rand was via Krugersdorp. In fact, it was the only route that would present itself to the most casual or careful investigation. It would pass through the rich pastoral district known as the Moot, whence come nine-tenths of the forage consumed in the Rand; and all the way the line would pass over farms which contributed largely to the produce market. To the surprise of everybody, President Kruger and his following in the Executive and the Raad declared for a circuitous costly route that would bring the line to Pretoria, nearly forty miles from the only market for the produce of Rustenburg. In addition to its cost and unnecessary length, the line would pass through a district utterly unproductive, from which not sufficient produce would be sent to keep a retail dealer going. Yet the Krugerite party fought for this outrageous proposal tooth and nail. Deputation after deputation waited on the President and endeavoured to shake his resolution, but without effect.

When the matter came up for discussion in the Raad the feeling was so obviously in favour of the Krugersdorp route that the President had to play a desperate game. As was his custom when pressed into a corner, he pleaded important

State reasons, making the surprising statement that at the recent meeting between himself and the President of the Free State the latter had strongly objected to the construction of a line of railway running towards the north.

Later on the State Secretary, Mr. Reitz, entered the Raad, and not knowing of the President's statement, replied, when questioned on the alleged objection of the Free State President, that no such remark had been made by Mr. Steyn. The retort of President Kruger was to call his own State Secretary a liar, an incident that caused a slight flutter for a day or two.

As there seemed no other way of settling the question, certain members of the First Raad requested me to accompany them to Bloemfontein to ascertain the feeling of the Free State Raad on the matter. We proceeded to the Free State capital, where we called an informal meeting that was attended by twenty-five members of the Raad, and asked their opinion on the question. They one and all declared that they had no opinion on the subject, which they regarded as entirely out of their ken, one of them remarking that if the Free State really objected to railways running north in the Transvaal, they would have objected to the Zoutpansberg railway, which opened the route from Rhodesia.

Armed with the authority of the Free State Raad to deny their hostility, we returned to Pretoria; but we could make no public use of our knowledge. The personal influence of President

Kruger was too strong. He brought it to bear on the members of the deputation, who weakly consented to let the matter drop. Meanwhile the secret of the President's advocacy of the unpractical Rustenburg-Pretoria route came out. He and his son-in-law Eloff owned several farms on the proposed line of route, which would have to be taken over by the Company at a high figure. Fortunately time had not permitted this iniquity to be added to the long list of similar outrages perpetrated at the cost of the very class whom Paul Kruger pretended to champion—the farmers.

Nothing ever brought home this inconceivable indifference of the President to everything in which he or his family are not financially interested so much as his conduct on the occasion of the first Agricultural Show held in Pretoria. Here at least was a public matter which one would have thought would stir the enthusiasm of the President, for his one Court of Appeal in all matters submitted to him or the Raad was, according to his frequent, almost habitual, phrase, the benefit of the farmers. He refused to assist or encourage electric tramways because they consumed no forage, and could not benefit the farmers; he championed the gunpowder concession that was the father of the dynamite infamy on the ground that farmers needed cheap cartridges to shoot game.

“The benefit of the farmer” was a standing catch phrase ever on the lips of the President;

therefore little wonder that we who worked to make the first Agricultural Show a success felt confident that we should at least have all the support the head of the State could give. We were a trifle disappointed that he showed such scant interest in the pre-opening period, but we forgave that in anticipation of the enthusiasm certain to be displayed when he saw the tangible practical result of our labours.

The day for the official visit came, and the President with it. I had the honour of acting as his guide through the show. I found my office a perfect sinecure. Not only did he require no guiding, but he needed no explanation, not even a descriptive catalogue. He rushed round the show yard in the incredibly brief time of seven minutes, staying to look at nothing, the height of his appreciation being expressed in a few words of praise for a particularly fine ox. From the time he left the Presidency till his return was less than half an hour.

It is easy to believe after this that the President never had any interest to waste over the consideration or even inspection of appliances or devices for assisting or benefiting agriculture, unless, of course, he could see a big or profitable concession in the idea. For example, a chemist who invited the President to witness an experiment in exterminating locusts—the greatest plague in South African agriculture—was not only refused Presidential patronage, but rebuked for his impertinent and profane attempt to interfere

with the will and work of God. A long line of inventors and projectors having some scheme for the direct or indirect benefit of the agricultural community have been systematically snubbed and discouraged.

Pretorian politics are of the purely commercial order. The benefit of the people is a phrase having only one interpretation there. If it means anything else but the benefit of Paul Kruger and Company, Limited, it is not understood.

In the very early days Paul Kruger practised the art of looking after his own interests in one peculiar manner, which was evidently not forgotten in the days of his wealth. It is well known that all the farms acquired in the first years of the Presidency of Paul Kruger are much larger than the average farm, and this despite the fact that they were measured in the same way as other people's, or at least the method seemed the same. The early primitive system of measuring a farm was by riding two sides of a square on horseback for sixty minutes in the direction of each side. As the walking pace of a horse is reckoned at three miles an hour over rough ground, this gave a block of nine square miles, which is roughly, though inaccurately, considered to be equal to 3,000 morgen, or 6,000 English acres. Paul Kruger was shrewd enough to see that, as the Scripture puts it, "There is much profit in the legs of a horse," so he made a point of selecting a quick-walking animal for these land-measuring

operations, with the result that he owns, or has owned, many hundreds of acres of land more than he was legally entitled to. It is but fair, however, to admit that the practice was not confined to Paul Kruger. Many Boers owned a horse kept specially for farm-measuring because of his fast walking pace.

The wealth of President Kruger and his family in farms alone was very considerable. For many years he made a practice of buying up Burgher rights—that is, the right given to every Burgher and son of a Burgher on attaining his eighteenth year to select a farm of 3,000 morgen. In 1894 the Raad abrogated this right, giving notice that all claims not exercised since 1875 were to be handed in to the Government, who would consider each case on its merits and award a farm or an *erf*—that is, a building site in a township. In the meantime President Kruger had bought up as many of these rights as possible. There were many in the market, for every Burgher's son did not avail himself of his privilege, and preferred to sell his right for cash. The price paid for these burgher rights by the President and certain members of the Third Raad to my knowledge averaged £5. President Kruger filed over 100 of these purchased rights, and when the Raad considered the claims "on their merits," they were assessed as worth a whole 6,000-acre farm each; so that by a cash expenditure of £500 President Kruger became the freeholder of 600,000 acres of land, or 937 square miles.

How much of the Transvaal was the property of President Kruger or his family cannot be accurately known, as much that belonged to him was registered in the names of nominees. It is safe, however, to say that he owned a larger amount of land than any private individual in the world.

This care of his own interests was amusingly illustrated in the matter of his salary. It was paid regularly on the 1st of each month in gold. The clerk from the Treasurer's office brought the £613 in gold, laid it on the table before the President, who satisfied himself by sight and touch that it was really golden coin, and the clerk paid it into the bank. It was a common remark of the President's, when asked to subscribe to any object, "I have no money; you must wait till I get my salary." I was with him one day when Commandant Erasmus called to request a contribution on behalf of the fund being raised for the sufferers by a disastrous flood in the north. "I have no money," was the curt reply to the appeal. "But, President, you have £7,000 a year," objected Erasmus. "I spend it all—I give it all away, and if I hadn't my farms I couldn't live," was the President's retort.

Erasmus began to show signs of anger, and the family is noted for its temper. His Honour allayed the rising storm by offering to subscribe £2. Erasmus remarked that it was very little, but he would accept it, and held out his hand for

the coins. "I have no money now; you must wait till the end of the month," was the reply, and Erasmus had to wait two months for the Presidential subscription.

The meanness of Paul Kruger in matters of this kind was well known. During the Malaboch campaign it came to our knowledge that the Burghers on commando were suffering great privations, and were particularly in need of medical comforts. My brother and I got up a subscription, which was very well supported by the Pretorians. We called on the President for his mite, and were met with the usual excuse—he had no money. After some haggling he took the list and wrote "een zak twak" (one bag tobacco), worth at the outside 30s. We asked when and where we were to obtain the tobacco. "My son will be going to Rustenburg soon," said he, "and I'll ask him to get the people on my farm to send it on some time when they are sending to Pretoria." And we had to be content with that.

President Kruger's private fortune was well invested. To my knowledge he had £700,000 in Java, where it was invested under the advice of Dr. Leyds, who was supposed to be an authority on the Dutch East Indies, and £400,000 in Berlin. I have frequently been present when the subject of the President's private investments has been discussed, and this circumstance, together with statements made to me by persons in a position to know, justify me in assessing the

actual cash value of his possessions at two and a half millions. Of course the very probable discovery of gold on any of his numerous farms might at any time have increased his wealth to an enormous extent, so that there are few private personages of whom it may be said with greater truth than of Paul Kruger that he possesses the potentialities of wealth beyond the most extravagant dreams.

There was reason in the old days to believe that these vast accumulations would be employed to further the aims of the Young Afrikaner party. If the Boer had possessed one tithe of the patriotic instinct with which he was credited, such a contingency might have been regarded as possible. But the typical Boer's conception of public life and duty was always *bizarre*. However patriotic he might be at heart he drew the line at voluntary sacrifice. He consented to have his goods commandeered with very bad grace, and he was never yet guilty of the folly of subscribing to a cause having for its object the benefit of his neighbour.

This reluctance to work for the public weal was strikingly exemplified in the case of the Robinson Loan. At that time the State was undoubtedly hard pressed for ready cash, and gladly closed with the offer of Mr. J. B. Robinson to advance £100,000 at a high rate of interest. Yet at that time there were fifty Burghers—ardent glowing patriots—who could have lent the money without trouble, and even without

interest. The President himself could have advanced a million if necessary, as also could his son-in-law F. Eloff, Abel Erasmus, Hendrik Schoeman, all noisy patriots of the most blustering type; yet not a man offered to put his hand into his pocket on behalf of *ons land*.

The Transvaal contains no monument of any kind erected and paid for by the individual in recognition of any public service or cause. The Paardekraal Monument was paid for out of the State funds, while the very stones which formed the base and excuse for the monument were removed from another man's farm. No Boer has ever subscribed a penny voluntarily to a public cause, and if he refused to make a sacrifice in the days of his prosperity he is hardly likely to do so in his adversity. It is a well-known fact that the wealthy Boer has never subscribed to charities. The list of subscribers to the handsome sum raised in a few hours by the Uitlanders for the Dutch victims of the great dynamite disaster does not contain a single Boer name.

Paul Kruger always insisted on the due payment not only of his pound of flesh, but of very much more, in his claims on behalf of his rights as a paid servant of the State. This weakness formed the subject of a persistent series of attacks made upon him by the Progressive Boer paper *Land en Volk*. When travelling on State business his Honour is allowed seven guineas per day, two guineas for food, and five for waggon hire. As he invariably travelled free on the

railway, by Government conveyance, or in the vehicle of his hosts on the road, this five pounds was clear profit. The Editor of the *Land en Volk* was prosecuted for *lèse majesté* for stating that his Honour employed a Government cart and State Artillery horses for a tour, yet sent in an account for waggon hire amounting to over £300. At the time the Editor produced the account receipted by the President, who in defence pleaded that he did not know the sum had been paid, as he had not intended that it should be. The Editor was acquitted, and persisted in taunting the President with dishonesty, until the latter, out of very shame, some months afterwards refunded the money.

In addition to the £300 a year allowed for coffee money, a grant of £60 is made annually for a carpet for the public room in the President's private residence. To my knowledge the carpet that covers the floor of that room is the same one that was there when the house was presented to the President by Mr. Nelmapius sixteen years ago, and the £960 of public money voted for the purchase of carpets has never been spent in the direction intended.

These are trifles perhaps, but they are characteristic. During the nineteen years that Paul Kruger was Head of the State he never entertained any person at his own expense; the very few acts of civilised hospitality extended by him to distinguished visitors were charged to the State. The personal expenditure of the

President was very little, for beyond the cost of maintaining an establishment that was exceeded in lavishness by the homes of nine-tenths of the married employees on the Rand enjoying a salary of £40 per month, he had no calls on his purse—or, to be accurate, he had calls, but did not respond to them. The sole exception was in the case of the Dopper church, of which he was a fairly liberal supporter.

Then we come to the point of the loyalty to his friends with which Paul Kruger was credited. If by this was meant that Paul Kruger made a point of never quarrelling, or alienating those who helped him to grow rich, then he deserved the eulogium. It is not generally known that the first time President Kruger came in collision with Chief Justice Kotze was through one of these characteristic “acts of loyalty.” Nelmapius, the pioneer of commercial industry in the Transvaal, and a man who undoubtedly did very much both for the President and the country, albeit that he was the original holder and suggester of many iniquitous concessions, was indicted for embezzlement, convicted, and sentenced to six months’ imprisonment by Judge Brand. President Kruger ordered his release, and himself went to the jail to see the order carried out. On hearing of this act, Chief Justice Kotze, who was on circuit, immediately returned, and ordered the re-arrest of Nelmapius. The President never forgave the Chief Justice for this step, and the ill feeling that he always manifested towards

Mr. Kotze dates from this incident. Within a month the Raad, on the initiative of the President, passed a special resolution, releasing Nelmapius.

It is characteristic of the Transvaal that no tribute was ever paid to the services of Nelmapius beyond the customary newspaper recital of his virtues in the very bald obituary notices. Yet no man did more for the Transvaal than he, and his death at the early age of forty was a genuine calamity to the State. It is true that many of his projects had for their ultimate object the benefit of himself, but there is this redeeming feature about most of Nelmapius's work, that while he did not forget Number One, yet he was instrumental in bringing about changes of lasting benefit to the community as well.

I remember that his name first came before the Transvaal as the author of a scheme for opening up a camel transport to Delagoa Bay. He was granted a concession, and general interest was felt in the matter, for it appealed to the farmers, and rendered the name of the originator a household word in the country. Many of his undertakings have since become of value, and have been absorbed into other enterprises, all productive and useful. The two concessions with which his name will always be associated are the Hatherley Distillery, appropriately named *De Eerste Fabrieken* (the First Manufactory), and the gunpowder concession, which developed into the infamous dynamite monopoly. This brandy

concession gave Nelmapius the sole right to distil brandy and every kind of spirit for the space of ten years. The splendid manufactory outside Pretoria was erected, and I was present at the opening ceremony, which was performed by the late General Joubert, then Native Commissioner. I remember one remark made at the inauguration which time has justified. "In this brandy and manufactory you have a short and cheap method of settling the native question."

This suggestion that the Kaffir might be cheaply exterminated by encouraging him to drink was received with marked approval. It was on this occasion that the much-quoted phrase "a corner stone of the State" was first used. Piet Joubert applied it to the distillery, a fact which appears to have escaped the notice of the journalists of the later period. Opinion was considerably divided on the merits of the brandy given us at the luncheon as a sample of the capacity of the distillery. It made most of the guests intoxicated. Consequently some regarded it as an ideal spirit; others, more seriously disposed, saw in it a method of settling the white as well as the black question.

Nelmapius has left his name indelibly inscribed on the labels of cheap spirit in the Transvaal, and to this day an inferior spirit is locally known as "Nelmapius." It is but fair to state, however, that the Hatherley Distillery has since those days vastly improved the quality of its productions, and in the opinion of some is

entitled to rank with the best Continental distilleries.

Here is another story illustrating this propensity of the President to defend the wrong cause. A Justice of the Peace of Piet Potgietersrust sold to me forty-five farms in his district. They were occupation farms, and went at a comparatively cheap rate. There was some delay in the granting of the title deeds, which was explained when, some months later, this official embezzled a large sum and absconded to Rhodesia. On inquiry I found that the farms he had sold to me, and for which he had received payment, he had already sold to another, and that he had no right to sell to either of us. I went to the Public Prosecutor, who informed me that a warrant had been issued for the man's arrest. My surprise was therefore great when a few months later I saw the absconder walking about the Government buildings. I informed the Public Prosecutor, who told me that nothing could be done, as the President had forgiven the defaulter, and had proved the genuineness of his forgive-and-forget policy by giving him an official appointment very much higher than what he had abused. I never got back the £500 out of which I was defrauded.

CHAPTER XI.

Story of the Electric Tramway Concession—The Minister of Mines—His ways and his fall.

THE story of the attempt to obtain the Johannesburg Electric Tram Concession is worth narrating because it may be taken as a very fair illustration of how enterprises of this kind were engineered. It occurred to a small body of speculators that there was a good opening for an electric tramway system that, in addition to catering for the ordinary traffic of the town of Johannesburg, should open up the districts east, west, north, and south by running ten miles in each direction. Regarded from the strictly business point of view, the project was sound and promising, for not only would it have reduced the cost of travelling from 6d. to 2d. per mile, but specially low rates with free storage were to be offered farmers bringing produce to the Johannesburg market. The gain to them would have been great, for it would have enabled their ox waggons to discharge their load ten miles outside the town and return homewards, instead of having to complete the journey and keep the oxen outspanned without food and water twenty-four hours on the market square.

The President favoured the scheme and promised it his support, the feature in the project

that appealed to him most strongly being the provision for opening up the Johannesburg market to the farmers. The matter was brought before the Executive, and supported by the President; with very little loss of time the concession was duly signed, sealed, and delivered, the only stipulation being the deposit of £500 with the Government as caution money. This money was raised by hypothecating the concession with the French Bank, and preliminaries were begun. A plant was ordered in America, routes surveyed, and £17,000 expended, and liabilities to a large amount entered into, when the concessionaires were staggered by the receipt of a letter from the State Secretary informing them that the Government had withdrawn the concession.

At this stage I was requested by the concessionaires to use my knowledge of the ways of Pretorian diplomacy on their behalf. I began by getting up a memorial to the Raad in favour of the electric tramway. Over 34,000 signatures were obtained, one-third of them being those of Burghers, farmers, and genuine sons of the soil. This was sent to the Government, and we patiently awaited the result, but not a word was vouchsafed even in reply to our letters of inquiry.

I then proceeded to Pretoria and saw the President, having first interviewed the State Secretary, Mr. Reitz, who expressed himself strongly in our favour, and promised us all the support possible for him to give. I saw the President

several times, but he refused to discuss the matter, and expressed himself so unusually hostile to the concession that my curiosity was aroused to learn the reason for his opposition. The only argument he attempted to employ was the very feeble objection that the introduction of electric traction would not necessitate the employment of horses, and that the farmers would not benefit by supplying the forage. I pointed out that, as it was, the farmers did not produce sufficient forage to supply the demand of Johannesburg, which had to import from the Free State and the Colony. It was evident there was some personal motive underlying all this, but I was not then able to arrive at the truth.

My next move was to get a deputation of the strongest men in the Raad to wait on the President and effect his conversion. It cost a big sum in cash, and promise of shares to induce these patriots to lend their services to further a scheme for the benefit of the farmers; but the impression on the President was *nil*. In reply to my protests one day he assured me that the farmers were dead against the scheme. I inquired how he knew that. "Only yesterday," said he, "I received 1,300 letters asking me not to grant the concession."

I was astonished, and went to the State Secretary, telling him what the President had said about the letters. Mr. Reitz burst out laughing. "You ought to know him by this time," he said. "He has received no letters

except one, and that is a request from his son-in-law for a concession for an electric tramway system all over the country."

The secret of the President's opposition was out. He was standing in with the opposition scheme of Mr. Frickkie Eloff, his son-in-law and financial adviser.

My work now began in earnest. I had to bribe the Raad, and rely upon the promise of the State Secretary to get the matter renewed in the form of a new resolution. I had no difficulty in inducing such members as I considered worth conciliating to accept a written promise to pay sundry sums amounting in the aggregate to £15,000. Of course, it was quite understood between us that this was not a bribe; merely an incentive to extra zeal on their part on behalf of the farmer. Mr. Reitz performed his part of the compact thoroughly, but the President was too smart for him. I had by the State Secretary's instructions kept myself ready for a moment's call, as the subject might be brought up again in the Raad at any time. One afternoon Mr. Reitz rushed out of the Raadzaal just as the President was leaving. "I'm sorry to have to tell you," he said, "that the President has done you a shot in the eye. During the absence of myself and the leading supporters of your matter the President got a resolution rushed through, declaring the matter finally disposed of, and you are dishd."

The next expedient consisted in inducing the Memorial Committee to reconsider the matter;

and in putting this piece of machinery in motion, I had to resort to the aid of the Third Raad, an expensive but necessary process. This influential body performed its contract, and the matter was again placed on the order for discussion in the First Raad. To my disgust and dismay the Chairman of the Raad opposed the resolution. It was evident that he had not been sufficiently enthused. I drew up a document binding myself to pay the Chairman's nominee £500, and got it passed to him. He opened the note, glanced at it, and the next time he opened his lips it was to unsay his adverse comments and announce his conversion to the scheme. The result was that the matter was referred back to the Government for report, a course which might have meant success; but for reasons over which the Raad might have had control that report was not made.

The story of the Boksburg claims that follows is not without parallel. Similar experiences, differing only in locality and trifling details, can be narrated by scores of persons who have passed through the ordeal of pegging claims that the Minister of Mines requires for himself. This story has the advantage of novelty, inasmuch as it resulted in the resignation of that most incompetent of all incompetent officials, Christian Joubert, Minister of Mines.

In 1895 I was consulted by a German as to whether certain claims at Boksburg were peggable under the Gold Law. I looked into the matter,

and as a result advised him to peg them at once. This he did, and the licences were duly taken out for twenty-two claims. When the second month's licence money was due the pegger tendered it in the usual way, but was informed by the Mining Commissioner of Boksburg that no further licences could be issued, as the claims were required for a Kaffir location. This was such a flagrant and barefaced breach of the Gold Law, and the man's rights were so obviously incontestable, that I did not hesitate to accede to his request to become his partner, and bear the cost of taking action against the Government to enforce the issue of the licences. Action was begun, and without going into court the Government agreed to issue the licences. I next wished to get the claims transferred to my name, as I had acquired them from the original pegger for £5,000. On tendering the licence fee the Mining Commissioner again refused to accept it, saying he had that day received a telegram from the Minister of Mines instructing him to issue no more licences nor grant transfer of the claims.

I brought an action in the High Court, and an order was issued by the full Bench, directing the Mining Commissioner and the Government to issue licence and pass transfer; but again on tendering the money I was met by the refusal of the Mining Commissioner, who said he had been instructed by the Government not to take notice of any order of the High Court in this matter. I went to the President and told him

what had occurred. He appeared to be very much annoyed, and expressed himself to that effect, adding that he was the more angry that I should be so badly treated. Turning to the members of the Raad who were present he told them the story of my saving the State from bankruptcy in the early days, a story he was in the habit of telling whenever he introduced me to strangers. His advice was that I should lay my case before the Executive Council in a letter which he would take under his special charge.

A few days later the Government informed me that they had decided to grant me half the claims. Such a proposal was equivalent to taking the wheels off a waggon. Even twenty-two claims formed a very small parcel, but when the number was reduced by half they were hardly worth considering, and there was very small chance of finding a purchaser for them. I represented this to the Government, and by way of compromise offered to give the surface rights of six claims for the purpose of the Kaffir location, the necessity of which I had good reason to suspect. At this point an influential member of the Raad came to me and suggested that if I gave him £5,000 out of the proceeds of the sale of my claims he would see that the matter went through ; if not—I knew the alternative, so agreed to be blackmailed. Then the Government announced its acceptance of my offer of the surface rights, that the whole twenty-two claims would be transferred to me in the

terms of the order of the Court, and that the Minister of Mines had been instructed to put the matter in order. That functionary made an appointment with me to go over the ground. He came, and coolly informed me that I must be content with the sixteen claims.

Again I went to the President and represented the arbitrary injustice of which I was the victim, pointing out that the High Court had ordered the surrender of the claims to me, yet the Government actually defied its own judges. The President endeavoured to talk me over, strongly advising me to accept the sixteen claims, adding, "My election is close at hand, and if I am returned I will see that you get the other six claims when the matter is brought up in the Raad." I accepted the terms, the President remarking, "It is now to your advantage to get all your friends to vote for me."

The Minister of Mines was again instructed to put this amended arrangement into proper form, and a year passed, occupied by wearisome attendances at the office of the Minister, who always had some childish excuse for delay, or ignored my applications altogether.

One Saturday night I was surprised by a visit at my house in Johannesburg from the Minister of Mines, accompanied by Mr. Barend Vorster, member of the First Raad, and Mr. Ferreira, whose guest he was. Mr. Joubert plunged abruptly into the subject matter of his visit. "I have come to talk about those claims," he said.

"All is now in order, but I'll be damned if I give them to you unless you pay me £500."

Accustomed as I was to similar demands for blackmail, I confess I was considerably taken aback by the speech. I could understand an underling coming to the point without undue preliminary, but for an important Minister of the State to come at night and abruptly demand toll was a little unusual. By way of gaining time I put the inquiry, "What about Mr. Forster—to whom I have agreed to pay £5,000—he is now interested in the business—has he to pay anything?" "Yes, he must pay £250, and both of you must pay up by ten o'clock on Monday."

"And suppose we don't?" I queried.

"Then I shall step into the Volksraad and get a resolution passed taking the claims away from you, and I shall turn the ground into a Kaffir location."

The tone of the Minister was so defiant and resolute that it inspired me with the determination to fight him. I now saw the reason for the gross injustice to which I had been subjected, and my plan of action was rapidly evolved.

Pretending that I wanted to leave the room to obtain the money, I brought two friends and placed them in a position to enable them to hear all that passed. Returning, I got Mr. Joubert to repeat his demand.

"I'll tell you what," he went on. "Pay me £10 this minute, pay Mr. Ferreira £90 within a week, and pay me £250 on Monday morning

in Pretoria; otherwise you will never see the claims." He continued, "It's time I made money. Paul Kruger has made himself rich, and I mean to start before it is too late."

I produced the £10, and before handing it to him I said, "Am I to understand that unless I pay you £10 now, £90 to Mr. Ferreira within a week, and £250 to you on Monday, you will deprive me of my property, which has been granted me by the High Court?"

"Yes, you understand it exactly," said he, and took his leave.

Immediately he had gone I called in my witnesses, reduced the conversation to writing, and at the earliest moment swore to it before a magistrate.

By sunrise on Monday I was closeted with the President, showed him my affidavit, and told him I demanded the arrest of the Minister of Mines on a charge of attempted blackmail and extortion. The President was naturally much perturbed. He begged me not to do as I threatened, but to go to the Minister of Mines, quote certain passages from the Bible to him, and threaten that unless he carried out the instructions given him to secure me my property, I would hand the affidavit to the State Attorney. I told the President it was impossible that I could speak to Mr. Joubert again, so thereupon I handed my sworn declaration to the State Attorney. He was too timid to act upon his own initiative, so consulted the Executive Council. They

referred the matter to a commission consisting of Mr. Schutte, Landdrost of Pretoria, and one of the closest personal friends of the Minister of Mines. Nothing was done for six months.

At the expiration of that time I received a notice from the Landdrost ordering my attendance to support my charge. When I presented myself I was informed by Mr. Schutte that he had a message for me from the President to the effect that he desired me to withdraw the charge, as the Minister of Mines would probably retire. I agreed to act on the suggestion on the understanding that the Minister of Mines retired within fourteen days. Landdrost Schutte took my conditions to the President, and shortly returned to inform me that they would be agreed to. I took the precaution of having the terms reduced to writing, and properly verified. For the first time in his official career Christian Joubert kept to the letter an engagement that did not fit his humour. Before the fourteen days had expired he retired from the public service to enjoy in a well-earned obscurity the proceeds of years of work in a department of whose rudimentary workings he was appallingly ignorant, and a bonus of £1,700, voted him by the Raad in recognition of his long and honourable services.

The last act the Minister of Mines performed was to sanction the transfer of the sixteen claims to my name. Those claims are worth to-day £2,000 each. I never received the six to which

I was entitled, nor was the Kaffir location placed upon them.

The next story may be accepted as typical. It is an experience that more than one pegger of valuable claims has gone through. Being poor, the victim had no chance of obtaining justice, for law costs in the Transvaal are said to be the heaviest in the civilised world. By way of preface I must explain that the principal source of profit to an unscrupulous official in the office of the District Mining Commissioner is getting early knowledge of gold claims either peggable or of sufficient value to be worth the attention of one of the big financial houses, who will naturally prefer to pay a bonus to an official for giving them a hint where good claims are to be pegged, rather than buy out another pegger. It follows, therefore, that when a poor man goes to the office and asks for licences for claims he has pegged, the business of the unscrupulous official consists in delaying the issue of licences until he has communicated with the financiers, and given them the opportunity of saying whether they want the claims. If they say yes, then some jugglery has to be performed which will enable the books of the office to prove that the claims in question had already been pegged by the financiers. Half the disputes over claims turn on the question of priority of pegging, and many a gross injustice and flagrant robbery has been perpetrated by the officials in the offices of the various Mining Commissioners on behalf

of some client prepared to pay them well for their villainy.

A poor man consulted me as to whether certain claims in the Boksburg district were open for pegging. On my advice he pegged them, and directly after received from a banking institution an offer of £2,000 per claim. On tendering his second month's licence money he was met with the not unusual refusal. The claims, said the Mining Commissioner, had been already pegged by another person. I went to the office and examined the books, and saw sufficient to satisfy me that erasures had been made, and that there was good reason to suspect other alterations would follow. I placed detectives on watch, and next morning they reported that three officials, accompanied by the secretary of one of the mines in the district, had spent some hours in the office of the Mining Commissioner and had been busy during the night with the books. I again examined them, and found many important alterations and erasures. I advised my client to report the matter to the Government. He did so, and Mr. Paul Maré, Landdrost of Boksburg, and one of the most honourable officials in the service, was appointed to take evidence in the case. His inquiry proved that alterations had been made, and established our case up to the hilt. His report was sent to Pretoria, and shared the fate of all such documents—it was never heard of again.

Advice of leading counsel was then taken and action brought in the High Court to declare my

client the original pegger and compel the Government to issue licences to him. Never was a case more free from doubt. The falsification of the books was proved—in fact, admitted—and the evidence of prior pegging non-existent. It was one of those cases that make men marvel at the fatuity of the defendant fighting. It was in this case that the member of the Third Raad approached my client and offered to ensure judgment for him for £50,000. The offer was of course laughed at, for I would have laid any odds on our getting a verdict, as would any lawyer who knew the facts—and was sure of the judge. This same representative of the Third Raad was later on seen in close conference with “the other side,” and, marvellous to relate, when judgment was delivered it was for that side.

CHAPTER XII.

Some Pretoria Scandals—Story of a farm sale—The Forest Concession—The Book Scandal—The Donkey and Mealies Contract—The secret of the Witfontein Scandal—The historic Brown Case—The Cold Storage Scheme—The final lottery—The attempted raid on the four and a half millions' worth of water rights—The Brickfields juggle.

THERE is little room for doubting that for every fraud perpetrated by the Government that is known to the public—or, rather, to a portion of the public—there were a dozen that were safely negotiated without anyone but the principals being the wiser. Despite its loud professions of being the champion of the Uitlander, the Johannesburg press was marvellously ill-informed. It was the rarest thing for the *Star* to expose or denounce a job, although they were being perpetrated almost hourly. It is true that, apart from the difficulty of getting at the facts, the legal risks would have been great, for perjury and the subornation of witnesses were carried on to so elaborate a point that no one would have considered it impossible to convict the most innocent, or secure the acquittal with honour of the most culpable, if sufficient money were forthcoming. I remember being concerned in an action in which the witnesses on the other side were Doppers.

"It's a pity ours are not Doppers," said my advocate, "for Doppers always swear as they are instructed."

There were few lawyers in Pretoria who would not undertake if necessary to produce sufficient sworn testimony to satisfy any impartial court of the truth of any statement, however extravagant or improbable. Critics of Transvaal officialdom knew this, and were therefore chary about committing themselves.

Then, again, these jobs were so elaborately enveloped and complicated under the guise of the simplest and most legitimate transaction that it required an expert to detect them. Everybody knew a job had been perpetrated, but few could prove it. The following case illustrates the circuitous methods by which the Pretorian schemers were able to conceal the true character of their jobs. The business I am about to describe was completed after the issue of the Ultimatum and the preparation for hostilities, the insatiate love of plunder being proof even against the excitement and distraction of a war which threatened the independence of the country.

It came to the knowledge of a relative of the President that a well-known and substantial Johannesburg grocer wanted to purchase a certain Government farm in the Watersburg district. The agent promised to arrange the matter, and this is how he did it. Knowing that the Government always listened very attentively to any request from a church committee, and rarely

hesitated to grant land when asked for, he approached such a body and made an arrangement. They were to ask the Government to give them this particular farm for church purposes. Having obtained it they were to discover that an *erf*, or building plot, in Pretoria would be more useful to them, and effect an exchange. This impudent plan was carried out. The committee were granted the farm, and almost before the ink on the transfer was dry, they had considered and accepted an offer of the proprietor of an erf worth £50 at the outside, to give it for the farm. The agent then sold the farm to the grocer, making a profit of £3,000. But this was only part of the scheme for making something out of nothing. The grocer spent a little money on the farm, sufficient to make a show, and justify a claim to having vastly improved the property. The next item consisted in finding some pretext for inducing the Government to buy back the farm they had given away for nothing. Here the invaluable services of the Third Raad came in. Some influential member of the Executive discovered, or pretended to discover, that in giving away the farm the Government had exceeded its authority, and that in order to prevent an injustice to "my Burghers," it was necessary that the President should move the repurchase of the farm. He did this, and the Government paid the grocer £60,000 of public money, half of which went by arrangement to the lucky Presidential

relative, and the two or three Raad members who had engineered the swindle.

On the face of it the transaction would bear investigation, and so long as the name of the instigator of it was kept dark, the most that could be said would be that the church had made a bad bargain by bartering a farm worth £60,000 for an erf worth £50; but of course the obvious reply to this objection would be that they were the best judges of the needs of their church, and, further, that they were not in a position to know that the farm was worth so much.

As criticism grew more acute the jobbers kept ahead of it by taking more pains to invest their schemes with an appearance of simple honesty. Nominees were frequently employed, and the real issue was so carefully involved that it was not always easy to recognise the real ownership.

Another impudent fraud that I was instrumental in exposing was known as "The Book Scandal." A Syndicate was formed in Pretoria under the title of "De Boekhandel Maatschappij" (Book Dealers' Co.). The principal shareholders were Government officials employed in the Education Department, and the secretary of the Syndicate was also secretary to the head of the Education Department. It is not surprising, therefore, that when the Government called for tenders for the supply of books and educational material for the schools of the State, the Syndicate obtained the contract, and at a very high figure.

Now, the Syndicate did not confine itself to educational books, but engaged in every branch of trade that is included in the business of book-selling, stationery, etc. The duty on all printed matter imported into the Transvaal was 30 per cent. The Syndicate parcels were all marked "On Government Service," and thus came in duty free. As the business done by the Syndicate was the largest of the kind in South Africa, its profits on the item of duty saved must alone have been enormous.

This admirable arrangement had been going on for years, when a new Inspector of Customs was appointed, and the fraud came to light. There was a prosecution for defrauding the revenue, sundry parcels of books were confiscated, and a fine of some hundreds of pounds imposed. Such an impudent action on the part of a mere High Court was not to be tolerated, so the usual machinery for quashing such interference was put in motion, consisting of a Government Commission of Inquiry, comprising the Head of the Education Department and two officials, who were shareholders of the Book Syndicate. The report of this Committee proved in favour of the Syndicate. The judgment of the Court was quashed, and the confiscated goods ordered to be restored. It is true the matter was later on brought up in the Raad and referred to the Government for report, but in the meantime the Syndicate was permitted to resume business on the old basis.

The Forest Contract was another of the swindles engineered by the Third Raad at the expense of the State. In 1895 an auctioneer and concessionaire who held the sole right of selling Government property invited my brother and myself to join a scheme for securing a valuable piece of Government ground near Pretoria. The plan, as disclosed, was to obtain the land on a very long lease, plant it with trees, and, after a decent interval, sell it to the Government by the aid of the Third Raad. We refused to join the scheme, and my brother, being a member of the Town Board, exerted himself to oppose the granting of the land by the Government. He went so far as to get a Board resolution passed condemning the alienation of public land under these conditions, and induced the Burghers to support it by a numerously signed petition. But when the Executive had made up their minds that there was money for themselves in a scheme, they were not to be deterred by any petition from "my Burghers," so the concession asked for was granted absolutely free of cost, and the concessionaire spent a few hundred pounds in planting trees.

The planting finished, the concessionaire sold the ground to the Government for £15,000, two-thirds of which went into the pockets of the Raad members who had assisted in the perpetration of the fraud.

Thus the Government paid £15,000 for planting a few hundred pounds worth of trees

on its own ground, a price by no means excessive if compared with that paid for assets less valuable than an embryonic forest.

The Mealies and Donkey Scandal is so well known to the general public that my only excuse for reviving the story is the fact that I heard the project discussed and arranged, I also mention it for the sake of the very characteristic incident that forms the tail piece.

When the rinderpest had done its work the farmers were left in a very lamentable condition, for the loss of oxen means to a farmer deprivation of his sole means of livelihood. He cannot plough his land, he cannot convey what produce he may have to market, nor can he fall back on the one last resource of the farmer who is driven to the horrible alternative of working or starving—riding transport.

The Raad therefore passed a resolution to purchase 24,000 donkeys, which were to be supplied to poor Burghers at cost price on very easy terms of repayment, and 200,000 bags of mealies, which were to be given to the very poor and paid for at a reduced rate by the less necessitous. This was too good a thing to miss, so the concessionaires swarmed round the Government buildings; but in vain, for the programme had been arranged well in advance. Mr. Barend Vorster, member of the First Raad, was given the right to purchase the donkeys, while the mealies were to be the care of Mr. Celliers, the holder of the Government auctioneering concession. When the busi-

ness had been completed certain Raad members, dissatisfied with their share of the commission, made a fuss, wanting to know what had been spent, and how much the concessionaires had netted. No proper accounts had been put in, but so far as could be arrived at, the amount unaccounted for was £200,000.

There was the usual Government reference for report by a Committee, on which by some strange oversight the persons accused did not sit; but that oversight did not affect the result, for the report was not handed in. It is worth noting that these donkeys had never been paid for by the recipients of them, and the loan remains as an asset for the new Government which doubtless Mr. Celliers will assist them to trace and realise.

Another outrageous transaction was made through the Cold Storage Concession. The increase in the demand for fresh meat, and the success obtained by the cold storage system in other countries, induced several persons to devote their energies to the formation of a similar project for the Rand. One leading and responsible firm undertook to carry out the business, the usual stipulation being that no concession be granted to anyone, not even themselves; in return for this reasonable consideration they offered to deposit a substantial guarantee that they would start operations at once.

The subject attracted the attention of the Third Raad as one promising rich plunder, and

operations were promptly commenced. With no difficulty they persuaded the Raad to do three things—first, grant them a concession for the installation of the cold storage system anywhere in the Transvaal ; secondly, to lend them £80,000 at 3 per cent. ; thirdly, to give them the right of selecting free of cost any suitable Government ground wherever they pleased. There was one slight difficulty. The Government wanted some guarantee that would make the job look genuine and give it an air of respectability. Mr. Solomon Gillingham's infinite resource soon found a means of accomplishing this feat. The Government, having lent them the capital, might also lend the guarantee. The Government kicked at this idea, so the matter was arranged by the concessionaires drawing only £70,000 of the sum lent, leaving £10,000 as security !

Having obtained possession of the money, the Third Raad proceeded to employ it in the furtherance of various interesting schemes they had in hand, which necessitated the use of a little ready money. When that business had been satisfactorily brought to a conclusion, the concessionaires leisurely set to work to carry out the scheme for which the money was lent. Solomon Gillingham went to England to purchase plant, and at the same time to act as Boer agent among the Irish, who fêted him in Dublin, and made much of this Pretoria baker, who represented himself, or at least was described in the inter-

views published in the Irish papers, as the chief adviser to President Kruger.

It was this same eminent Transvaaler of whom a good story was told anent the simplicity of the Boer on his travels. A few years before his trip to Dublin he made his first visit to England, and astonished and amused the ship's company by handing to them for safe keeping a bag of ox biltong, or sun-dried strips of beef, and a sack of Boer biscuits, which some wag had assured him would be necessary for his sustenance on the voyage.

When the buildings for the storage were begun, it was found that Solomon Gillingham was virtually the contractor for the supply of every article required, the work being let out as a sub-contract to certain of his personal friends, while he was appointed managing director at £1,000 a year.

Many English readers must have heard of the celebrated suit of Brown *versus* the Transvaal Government. This was the case which led to the dismissal of Chief Justice Koetze for giving a judgment adverse to the interests of the Kruger family. This act also had, as after results have shown, a great deal to do with the political crisis that resulted in the Bloemfontein Conference. The story is worth telling, apart from its intrinsic interest as a history-making incident, since it illustrates the extremes to which President Kruger would go to further his own personal interests and those of his family.

The Gold Law of the Transvaal provides that as soon as a certain area or district—which may consist of one farm or many—has been proved to contain payable gold, it may, with the consent of the owner or owners of the property in the area, be proclaimed a goldfield. The moment the field is proclaimed, every man who has paid his yearly poll tax of 18s. 6d. has the right to peg off claims. In the February of 1895 it had been decided to proclaim a large farm named Witfontein, situate west of Johannesburg. It was believed to be a very rich property, and naturally the eyes of speculators in claims were turned hungrily in that direction. Among the eager and expectant ones were representatives of the family of the President, who, doubtless as a bribe for the proclamation, had been given 700 claims by the proprietor. Now the law had always permitted the proprietor of a proclaimed farm to retain a certain number of claims for himself. These constituted what is technically known as the *Mijnpacht*, and as they were supposed to represent the pick of the bunch, a *Mijnpacht* was the most valuable portion of a proclaimed farm. In addition to this, the law allowed the farm owner to assign to any friends he chose a number of claims known as *Vergunning*, or preference claims. These, like those constituting the *Mijnpacht*, were carefully selected. The number of *Vergunnings* that a farm owner could give away had often been a matter of dispute, but between the decision to proclaim Witfontein and the publication of

that intention in the official gazette, the High Court had given an important judgment which once and for all settled the number of *Vergunnings* at sixty.

Witfontein was duly proclaimed, and the momentous day fixed when the seekers after fortune at a stroke could obtain their licences at the Mining Commissioner's office at Krugersdorp and rush off as fast as specially retained fleet horses could carry them to the proclaimed ground, where the business of the pegger consists in hurriedly measuring off his claims, each 150 by 400 feet, and knocking in a piece of wood at each corner, bearing the name or names of the peggers. It may easily be imagined that the rivalry and struggle to be first in the field and in the selection of the most promising claims was intense. Guns are provided to shoot down the horses of other peggers, prize-fighters and desperadoes are engaged to secure the pegging of certain claims on behalf of syndicates who can afford to pay well, and altogether a claim pegging is a scene of a mad rush for wealth in which every evil passion finds expression and selfishness is dominant.

As the number of claims possible to one pegger do not make a block sufficiently large to be marketable, it is usual for a number of individual peggers to combine and agree to peg claims adjoining each other, so as to make a complete and extensive block. Dozens of such syndicates were formed, and as money was generally freely

spent in securing the aid of fleet riders and muscular bodyguards, it is evident that the individual pegger had a very poor chance.

On the day preceding that on which Witfontein was to be pegged, the Kruger clique were thrown into a fluster by the receipt of the news that a syndicate, acting on the authority of the recent judgment in the matter of *Vergunnings*, had determined to peg 640 of the claims already pegged by the Kruger set, leaving them only the 60 allowed by law. It was evident that if the Kruger clique were not to be robbed by the High Court, time had to be gained to enable them to devise some scheme for securing those 700 claims. A plan was soon hit upon. When the Mining Commissioner of Krugersdorp reached his office the next morning he found it besieged by a crowd of would-be peggers waiting to pay for and secure their licences. They numbered several thousands, and the greater portion of them had been standing in position all night, some for seventeen hours, while outside and all along the road to the district to be proclaimed, twelve miles distant, were relays of horses to carry the licence holder rapidly to the ground where his party were already waiting, peg and mallet in hand, to secure their claims.

When the Mining Commissioner appeared at the door it was to read an official telegram which ran to this effect: It having been brought to the knowledge of Government that violence was likely to result from the pegging at Witfontein,

the pegging was postponed until a date to be announced in a subsequent issue of the *Staats Courant*. It says something for the orderly character of a Rand crowd that no outburst of violence followed this provoking announcement. It meant the unnecessary expenditure of many thousands of pounds on preparations.

It appeared afterwards that the withdrawal of the proclamation was done by a hurried resolution of the Executive, on the advice of State Attorney Esselen. The Gold Law is very explicit on this point—that the proclamation of a goldfield is a binding contract on the part of the Government which cannot be abrogated. Knowing this, certain persons decided that the farm was now open to peggers, despite the postponement, which they regarded as illegal. Among those who so decided and who acted upon their determination was an American named Brown. He went out and pegged certain claims. When later on the Mining Commissioner refused to issue licences to him, he brought action against the Government for compensation. Chief Justice Koetze held that the proclamation was binding, that Brown was entitled to peg as he did, and that the Government must pay him the sum he lost by not being given transfer of the claims he had pegged and might have sold at a large profit. It is clear, therefore, that this decision placed the Government in a very awkward position, for Brown's case affected several others, and, what is more to the point, it rendered the 640 *Vergunning*

claims already pegged by the Kruger family public property and liable to be pegged by the first comer.

The Third Raad came to the rescue at this critical stage. They proposed a scheme which, although originally intended to benefit only themselves, worked satisfactorily in practice. It was a proposal that instead of allowing peggers to scramble for their claims on the "Might makes right" principle, each man or woman who paid for a licence should be allotted a number drawn at random, and representing a block of six claims. In the meantime the 700 Kruger claims would be withdrawn from those open to pegging and reserved as originally intended. This ingenious plan was carried out seven months later, when Witfontein was re-proclaimed, and the largest crowd ever collected on one spot on the Rand proceeded to peg off the blocks which the fortune of chance had given them.

Brown meanwhile was vainly endeavouring to profit by the judgment of the Court, but the Government refused to pay the damages awarded or to hand over the claims. Proceeding to the extremes of folly and impudence the Raad defied the High Court, and it is a matter of history how Chief Justice Koetzee was dismissed for refusing to acknowledge the right of the Executive to override the Constitutional law by a mere *besluit*, or resolution.

I have re-told the story of the Witfontein proclamation mainly as an illustration of Kruger-

ite methods in the furtherance of personal gain. A slight computation will show the loss inflicted by this arbitrary action in the attempt to secure those 700 claims. It is safe to assess the loss caused by the postponement of the pegging at £5,000 at least, for the distance of the ground from the line of railway necessitated the employment of vehicles at extortionate rates. The farm owner lost his share of the claim licences that would have accrued during the seven months that intervened between the first and second proclamation, which would have realised £8,750. In addition to this, a fresh survey of the farm was ordered to secure the reservation of the 700 Kruger claims. This survey cost at regulation rates £7,000. To this must be added the expenses incurred by the peggers at the second pegging. They numbered over 12,000, and the outlay of each man may be safely put at £2. This brings the total to £44,750, which was the cost of Paul Kruger's illegal attempt to defraud the public of 640 claims for the benefit of himself and family.

In this connection I was a member of a syndicate that pegged at the same time as Brown and under the same conditions. We also brought an action against the Government, obtained judgment, and were awarded damages. Owing to the influential position occupied by some of the members of our syndicate, the Government favoured us by partially obeying

the order of the High Court. They paid us a small portion of the award, and we are still waiting for the balance!

The next and last occasion on which the lottery system was applied to the distribution of claims was early in 1899, when the unsuspecting Uitlander was induced to contribute a large sum to the War Fund then being formed. The Government announced that certain unproclaimed districts near Johannesburg would be thrown open to peggers on the lottery system. The conditions were that every man and woman who could produce a receipt for their poll tax, together with arrears, would be entitled to a licence to peg a certain number of claims. Never was such a rush of defaulting tax-payers seen in any country in the world. Men who had evaded the tax for years came up and cried *peccavi*, paid their five, six, and even ten years' arrears, and were made happy by the receipt of a number which entitled them to rank among the drawers in the claim lottery that might bring a fortune. I know as a fact that the Government had no intention of proclaiming the ground, and that the ruse was adopted as an efficacious method of extracting a final drop of blood from the Uitlander as his contribution to the war chest. It was a master stroke, and brought nearly half a million to the Treasury.

A particularly impudent attack on the mining companies was once planned by Christian Joubert when Minister of Mines. He discovered that

certain water rights had lapsed by the effluxion of time, the owners not having taken advantage of their right to turn them to use within three years. These rights now covered ground which was valuable as claims for deep levels, and at a moderate estimate they were worth four-and-a-half million pounds. The Minister of Mines arranged with three or four Raad members to form a syndicate, which, the moment the proclamation appeared, should be ready to go out and peg these immensely valuable claims. He in the meantime would arrange for a sudden issue of the proclamation, in order to give the syndicate the necessary start. Fortunately, while the Minister of Mines was looking up certain information in the office of the Johannesburg Mining Commissioner, an extra smart secretary of one of the mining companies happened to be present, and saw and overheard something that put him on the alert. He promptly communicated his suspicions to his principals, with the result that such action was taken as effectually frustrated this design on the industry. It is interesting to know that the parties to this scheme included leading members of the Raad, and the original agreement which bound them to carry out and share in this act of robbery is in my possession.

The following story leaves one in doubt whether to be the more astonished at the gullibility of the Raad or the effrontery of the author of the scheme. It had been brought to my

knowledge that the clay in that portion of Johannesburg allotted to the poor Burghers for brickmaking was giving out. In the course of my perambulations I had noticed that ample clay existed in Braamfontein, near a suburb of Johannesburg. Braamfontein had been for some time proclaimed as a prospecting field; that is, a person holding a prospector's licence would have the right to search for signs of gold, but could not peg claims. My idea was to withdraw this piece of ground from the operations of the Gold Law by "de-proclaiming" it and handing it over to the more useful purposes of increasing the brick supply of the rapidly expanding town of Johannesburg, which was far below the demand. I saw the Mining Commissioner, and advised that the "de-proclamation" be effected quietly, otherwise some people might rush in at the last moment and peg off claims on the chance of having their right recognised and a claim for compensation maintained against the Government.

I have already said that I had made the Gold Law my special study, and it was not until I had drawn the attention of the judges to the point that they recognised the very important distinction between a farm proclaimed for prospecting and one proclaimed for pegging. The formal notice "de-proclaiming" the Farm Braamfontein appeared in the *Staats Courant*. That very morning I noticed a number of pegs in the ground, bearing the name of the

President's son-in-law, and comprising about 250 claims. When he tendered his second month's licence money the Mining Commissioner refused to accept it, on the ground that the claims were unpeggable, the land being "de-proclaimed." The pegger brought action against the Government to compel them to issue licences and recognise his title to the claims. The pegging in the first instance was impudent enough, but what is to be said of what follows?

The pegger coolly informed the Government that he would agree to fight his action as a test case, that he would pay the costs in any event, and he claimed the right to nominate and pay the advocate who represented the Government. Further, he magnanimously offered, if he won the suit, to sell the claims to Government for use as brickfields for £25,000. This preposterous suggestion was accepted. The action came on, the Government advocate offered practically no defence, and the verdict was for the pegger.

The Government paid him £25,000 for the claims, and the President, in referring to the matter in the Raad, actually took credit for having engineered a satisfactory bit of business, since the action had not cost the State a penny, the costs being paid by the winner. The Raad swallowed this piece of transparent humbug, and complimented the astute Krugerite on being a friend and benefactor of the State.

The Government later on bought a piece of land for the brickmakers, situated eight miles out of the town, so far that it was never considered worth using, and, to add to the grotesqueness of the job, granted a concession for the construction of a railway to the spot to one of the family party.

CHAPTER XIII.

Stories of Transvaal Bench and Bar — Judge Burgers sentences a cock to death—Vagaries of Landdrosts' law—A bride in pawn for the marriage fee—The intelligent Zarp—His way with Kaffirs—Polyglot witnesses—The native interpreter—My clerk holds *post-mortems*—The crime of singing "God save the Queen."

NOTHING would be easier than to fill a good-sized volume with stories of the Transvaal Bench and Bar, and particularly of the travesities on law and justice that have rendered the Landdrosts' courts of the outlying districts a standing joke. But the temptation to draw largely on my reserve is one which I deem it wiser to resist; the bulk of the incidents I could relate would appear to English readers of so far-fetched and extravagant a character that I should incur very serious risk of prejudicing myself in their estimation.

On the occasion of my visit to England I ventured to tell some of these stories, with the result that I gained something of the character of a typical American yarn-spinner. With this experience before me I shall hold back many absolutely true and excellent stories until better knowledge of the Transvaal of the past prevails.

It is but fair to explain that the condition of things I found in the High Court on my arrival in the Transvaal seventeen years ago did not

exist long, and though the Bench was always remiss in the matter of dignity in the absence of Chief Justice Koetze, the Bar was kept at a high and improving standard, thanks to men like Mr. J. W. Leonard, Q.C., Dr. Coster (who was killed at the battle of Elands-laagte), Messrs. Curlewis, Wessels, and one or two others; these lawyers would have stood high in reputation in the courts of any country. In the early days there was no restriction on anyone practising law, physic, or chemistry, with the result that for years the Transvaal was the paradise of the quack in all three branches of special knowledge. At the same time, several of these self-educated, unqualified practitioners in the law courts attained to a deserved distinction, and displayed considerable ability. For example, one advocate, who has for years enjoyed an enormous practice and amassed a very large fortune, was originally an itinerant shoemaker, carpenter, and general handy man, who, after turning his hand to numerous professions, settled down to law, and amassed great wealth by practising as attorney and advocate—there being no distinction between the two branches of the profession until recent times.

The advocates and attorneys of to-day are, with very few exceptions, duly qualified men, the advocates being either English barristers or Hollanders, while the attorneys have fulfilled the stringent requirements of the Law Societies of Cape Colony or Natal.

Among the judges Mr. Jorriessen is the only unqualified lawyer. He was a Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, and holds the Dutch degree of Doctor of Divinity. He was qualified for his position by a special *besluit* of the Volksraad, which declared that the reverend gentleman was fully conversant with law, and a fit and proper person to administer it. The tendency to flippancy that was sometimes apparent in the early days on the part of both judges and advocates is rarely observable now, and the vagaries of Judge Jorriessen—his indiscreet *obiter dicta* and other evidences of approaching age, combined with congenital irascibility—supply the bulk of the matter for serious or humorous criticism on legal *laches*.

The story of Judge Burgers sentencing a cock to death has often been told and discredited outside the Transvaal, but the incident really occurred. It happened in 1883. His Honour was presiding over the Circuit Court at Lydenburg, when the proceedings were interrupted by the persistent crowing of a cock in the neighbourhood of the court. The judge stood the annoyance for some time, then stopped the proceedings, and ordered the messenger of the court to arrest the bird and bring him before the Bench. This was done, and the judge solemnly sentenced the fowl to death for contempt of court. Execution was carried out on the spot by the messenger wringing the creature's neck.

Judge Burgers was an able lawyer, and, according to the opinion of those days, a strictly just judge; but his eccentricities were very pronounced, and on more than one occasion detracted considerably from that divinity that should hedge a High Court judge. Fortunately such conduct on the part of a judge of his standing was very exceptional, but as much cannot be said for the Landdrosts, or stipendary magistrates, whose eccentricities have been so humorously yet faithfully described by the author of "Prinsloo of Prinsloosdorp." These functionaries were usually chosen for any reason save fitness for their office. Not one in fifty had ever opened a law-book, and several were completely illiterate. I have known Landdrosts who could only read with difficulty, and one actually learned to write after his appointment. Needless to say, their law was of the home-made pattern, and was a standing source of profit to the qualified practitioners, who rarely had any difficulty in stating a good case for appeal to the High Court. The Landdrosts were necessarily largely in the hands of their public prosecutors, men who frequently were no better qualified than themselves.

Only a few months before the war a young Afrikaner of my acquaintance, having got into difficulties with his cash as a subordinate official in another department, was given the choice of a position in the commissariat of the State Artillery or the public prosecutorship of a district. He chose the latter, as it would afford him an opportunity

of carrying on business as a horse-dealer, for which he had some capability. He came to me and seriously requested that I would never mention his illiteracy, at least not until he had satisfied his personal grudge against certain residents in the district to which he was going by prosecuting them "for something, sooner or later." As his unfitness was obvious to the most casual observer, my exposure of it would have been superfluous; it certainly would not, and did not, militate against him in the eyes of the authorities at Pretoria. It is gratifying to know that he did not hold the position long. He began operations against his enemies too soon, and found it wiser to retire. A more congenial vocation was waiting for him in the Secret Service, where he was able to score over several old opponents by getting them on the list of suspects. As public and newspaper criticism was practically confined to the Rand, it is easy to imagine that under such immunity the Landdrosts of out-of-the-way districts gave full vent to their idiosyncrasies and personal prejudices.

A year or two since a little commotion was caused by the fact coming out that one of these rural Landdrosts had authorised the employment of torture to force a confession of theft from a native. The Kaffir was suspended from the roof by the wrists, while hot irons were applied to the soles of his feet by the police. The excuse proffered by the Landdrost was ingenuous. He

had known this boy of old, he said, and the only way to make him speak the truth was by burning the soles of his feet, which were unusually tender for a Kaffir! The excuse was evidently considered a justification by the Pretorian authorities, for no one heard anything more of the "official inquiry" that was instituted. It had, however, one good effect. The Landdrost stated that if he had known such a fuss would have been made, he would not have taken such action, which illustrates the value of public criticism, even in the case of Landdrosts.

In their treatment of natives the Landdrosts as a body were severe to the point of barbarity. "To be accused is to be guilty" was the axiom in most of these courts, and a Kaffir who was acquitted on a charge brought against him by a policeman had achieved something worth talking about for the rest of his life. "Tell him to plead guilty" was a frequent injunction to the Kaffir interpreter. This functionary was in his way a very potent weapon of injustice, and scores of cases have occurred in which these rascals interpreted the testimony of the witnesses, or the statements of the accused, as suited them.

The native interpreter of one district court had a wide and evil reputation in this respect, and is known to have amassed wealth by extorting blackmail from his victims. The fact was known to, or at least suspected by, the Landdrost, who refused to take action. It is not often that a Boer bears any friendly feeling towards a Kaffir

servant, however faithful his services may have been, but in this case the exception was forthcoming. This Kaffir had been the useful henchman of the Landdrost in the days when he had qualified for magisterial duties by practising as a solicitor on the highway, and had also gained notoriety as a cattle thief. The interpreter was granted a licence rarely accorded to Kaffirs, and exercised it. The only redeeming feature in the business is that the Landdrost several times declared that he exercised his judgment as to how far he believed his interpreter.

Pretoria enjoyed the distinction of having had three chief Landdrosts who have been liberal contributors to the collection of Transvaal magisterial humours. I have mentioned the case of one of them, Koos Smit, having the Cape Boys and Girls flogged for attending a dance with the consent of their masters. Another of them earned a crown of ridicule by inquiring who Van Linden—the Dutch Blackstone—was, when his work was quoted by an attorney. “A great authority on Roman Dutch law,” was the answer. “That law may do for his court, but I am Landdrost here,” was the perfectly serious reply.

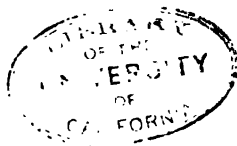
I was once present in the Pretoria Court presided over by Landdrost Schutte. A coolie store-keeper had had a window broken overnight, and, concluding it to be the work of Kaffirs, called in the aid of the police. It is the time-honoured custom of Transvaal policemen, when in quest of a native offender, to arrest any Kaffir who happens to

be nearest the scene of the crime. Accordingly, following precedent, this Zarp coming upon three natives sitting round a watch-fire in the street, arrested and charged them with having broken the window. The coolie prosecutor had not seen the act, so could not identify the prisoners, and it was obvious to everyone in court that they knew nothing of the affair. Their story was that they had been sitting an hour or two where they were found by the policeman, and there was nothing to discredit their statement. Even the Landdrost had a doubt, a doubt so grave, he said, that he intended to give the prisoners the benefit of it, and would only fine them thirty shillings apiece, with the alternative of a week's imprisonment. "Had I not this very grave doubt," he added, "I should have fined you £10, or three months' imprisonment." The Kaffirs went to gaol.

Schutte has always had the reputation of being very keen in looking after his perquisites, which may help to explain how it comes about that the simple illiterate man whom I knew in the early days as a smouser, or pedlar, became one of the wealthiest of the Pretoria officials. The following story is very characteristic of him. A young man called upon me in great distress, wanting to borrow a sovereign. He had been with his bride before Landdrost Schutte to be married. The ceremony had been duly performed, and he tendered what he believed to be the proper fee, when to his horror the Landdrost informed him that he

required a sovereign more. This the bridegroom did not have with him, so he told the Landdrost that he would pay it later. Schutte was not the kind of man to risk losing a sovereign to which the law entitled him, so he instructed the bridegroom to go in search of the balance, leaving his bride in custody as security. I shall never forget the look of mingled anxiety and delight on the face of the poor girl when she saw her husband returning to take her out of pawn.

There is a story of a Rand policeman which I have heard Schutte tell, and of whose authenticity I have no doubt, for it is precisely what would have been done by almost any official with sufficient cunning to get himself out of a scrape. A Kaffir undergoing a sentence of two years' imprisonment in Johannesburg gaol succeeded in getting away from the outside labour party, but was recaptured some miles distant. The police sergeant was sent to bring him back, and this functionary, having received the boy at the local gaol, and given a receipt for him, tied the runaway to his stirrup and began the march to town. Policemen in the Transvaal are always on the free drink list at every canteen, whether the proprietor likes it or not, and the sergeant availed himself of the right at the first roadside canteen he came to. He remained so long that the prisoner got tired of waiting for him, and having slipped his handcuffs, got away. In the ordinary course this would not have mattered much, but it happened that a new Chief Constable had just



been appointed, and, to the disgust of the force, was compelling them to observe something approaching discipline. He had begun by discharging a batch of the worst offenders against law and order, which had put them to the inconvenience of having to go to Pretoria and see the President, who re-installed them and eventually discharged the tyrannical stickler for discipline in the force.

But at this time the obnoxious official was still in power, so that the loss of the prisoner might prove a serious matter to the policeman. Being a man of resource, he had no difficulty in finding a way out of the impending trouble. He arrested the first Kaffir he met, and took him to Johannesburg, where he was in due course taken before the Landdrost and sentenced to six months' extra imprisonment and fifteen lashes for the attempt to escape. He received both the lashes and the six months, and the astute police sergeant's character was saved.

One source of great injustice and maltreatment of the Kaffir was the Pass Law, an enactment admirable in its conception and intentions, but virtually useless in practice, except as a medium for increasing the Treasury chest and providing lucrative offices for the incompetent friends and relatives of officials. *Apropos* of the latter point I may mention that in one Government office in a small town there were not less than thirty-two officials out of a total of eighty who were related to members of the Executive and the Raad.

Under this Pass Law any person, official or civilian, had the right to order a Kaffir to produce his pass for inspection. Non-possession of this document rendered the native liable to fine, imprisonment, and lashes, generally the two latter, for a passless boy was presumably unemployed, and therefore unable to pay the penalty imposed. The police received a bonus of one shilling for every Kaffir arrested, and as the frightened native was fully aware of the consequences of a conviction he became a ready victim to the policeman, who, having torn up the pass produced for inspection, demanded whatever money the boy might possess as an alternative to arrest. The following case may be taken as typical, and illustrative of the impunity with which the police carried out their work of harrying the unfortunate native.

I was standing one morning talking to a group of legal gentlemen on the Church Square in Pretoria—the most public spot in the town—when our attention was attracted to an altercation between a Kaffir and a constable. Presently the latter knocked the native down in the brutal manner always followed in arresting them, and was proceeding to handcuff him when the unusual violence induced us to interfere and ask what was the matter. The constable insolently bade us mind our own business, threatening to arrest us if we interfered, but under pressure vouchsafed the explanation that he was arresting the Kaffir for having no pass. Hearing this, the boy protested that he had a pass, but that the constable

had torn it up. I had noticed the man throw away some pieces of paper, so we collected and examined them. The fragments proved the boy's statement to be correct—they were portions of a monthly pass in due order. We again expostulated with the Zarp, who insolently repeated his threats and dragged the boy off to the charge office. Next day the Kaffir was prosecuted and punished with imprisonment for resisting arrest.

It may be asked why we did not go to the court and intervene. The reply is obvious. Any white man who interfered on behalf of a Kaffir would soon find officialdom on his track, and if he had a livelihood to earn in the Transvaal he would discover what it meant to be a marked man.

The ignorance and incompetency of the Zarp—so called from the initials on his uniform of the words "Zuid Afrikansche Republiek Politie"—had its humorous side, though unfortunately the victims of it were not always as appreciative as they might be. I was once in the market place at Pretoria with my brother, who was a member of the Town Board with certain authority over the market. The noise of conversation and the babble of the coolies rendered it difficult to hear the auctioneer, so my brother called the Zarp on duty and instructed him to preserve order, remarking rather loosely, "Nobody must make a noise here."

The officious youth sprang upon a table, called for order, and in peremptory tones

announced that no one must speak in the market-place. The auctioneer, who had suspended his cries to listen to the official proclamation, resumed his calls for bids, when the Zarp rushed at him, and threatened to arrest him if he opened his mouth again. The astonished salesman appealed to my brother to explain to the Zarp that there were exceptions to every rule, which he did, to the disgust of the guardian of law and order.

It is not surprising that with men of this stamp as guardians of the peace and public, both came off very badly at times. The men were ignorant and gullible to a degree hardly conceivable; few could read or write, and those who could read a little found penmanship beyond them. Advantage was frequently taken of this shortcoming in order to confound an officious Zarp by presenting him with some document purporting to be an official authority for some illegal act. Under the licensing law no canteen or bar might remain open after 9 p.m. without a special permit, with which nearly every landlord provided himself. It was the duty of the police to occasionally call for this permit, and as it frequently happened that it had been overlooked, it was generally quite safe to hand him any partially printed form, so long as it resembled the genuine article somewhat in shape and size. A brewer's invoice or delivery note generally sufficed for the purpose.

I do not defend or justify the following episode, and only tell it by way of illustrating

the simplicity of the Zarp, and the ease with which he could be bluffed and generally bamboozled into overlooking an obvious breach of the regulations. At the same time it shows how implicitly they accepted the axiom—a Transvaal official may do as he pleases.

I was driving home one evening rather hurriedly to my residence in the Johannesburg suburbs, when I found it more convenient to break the regulations than observe them, so drove on the wrong side. Suddenly two Zarps rose from the side walk, where I had apparently disturbed their rest, and seized the heads of my horses so violently that the vehicle was nearly upset. I naturally felt highly incensed, and having relieved my feelings in the Taal, which lends itself admirably to this purpose, I demanded how they dared do this thing to me. They began to be impudent, whereupon I inquired if they knew who I was, and how it came that they did not know the Chief of Police. Immediately they became obsequious and apologetic, and, keeping up the imposture, I ordered them to go to the office and take their discharge. They began to whine and entreat for mercy, making all kinds of childish excuses, which induced me to relent and forgive them, for which they were profuse in their thanks. I have often wondered what would have happened if they had discovered the truth.

Some of the humours of a police-court result from the polyglot character of the proceedings.

Probably few courts of justice had to express their mandates through so many oral mediums as those of the mining centres. Dutch was the official language, and any magistrate employing any other was not only subject to fine, but laid himself open to a suspicion of loyalty quite as much as if he had been reported to Pretoria for raising his hat at some public assembly where "God save the Queen" was sung or played. The First Criminal Landdrost of Johannesburg was fined £5 for using the word "bicycle" in court. The authorities decided that it was English, and officially announced that in future Landdrosts who did not wish to be mulcted in fines must use the word "Rijweel," or riding wheel, in referring to a bicycle.

Some of the languages I have heard spoken by witnesses in court are English, French, German, Danish, Russian, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Yiddish, several Indian dialects, and Chinese, together with Zulu and other Kaffir tongues. Little wonder that the proceedings sometimes became mixed. I remember a case in Johannesburg where the following circuitous method had to be adopted to get at the evidence of a woman from some northern district of Europe. She told her story to a female friend, who turned it into Yiddish. The Yiddish interpreter spoke German, and the German attempted to pass the tale on in English, but another German had to be sent for to translate the queer German into English, when the interpreter of the

court took it in hand and reduced it to official Dutch. How far the final translation differed from the original statement would be interesting to know.

While sitting as Landdrost I once had to deal with a Dutch-speaking witness of the most assertive, "cocksure" type. He had made some particularly emphatic statement which provoked me to remark *sotto voce*, "Don't be so dogmatic." The interpreter, quite unnecessarily, translated my ejaculation into Dutch, but the word dogmatic evidently puzzled him, for he paused a few moments ere he convulsed the court and astounded the witness by telling him, "The Magistrate says you must not be so *hondachtig*." "*Hondachtig*" is literally "dog-like."

One of the strongest characteristics of the Hollander official in the Transvaal has always been a pompous officiousness, and a disposition to pose as mentor both to colleagues and superior officers. I had a typical specimen as a clerk at the Kantoor. I once sent him to a distant part of the district to make inquiries into a fatal shooting accident. A man was pulling a rifle from the bottom of the cart when it exploded, the bullet passing through his heart and killing him on the spot. This clerk was a particularly timid fellow, and always carried a revolver and a long dirk, the one as protection against the miners, the dirk as a safeguard against the raids of an old lion, who occasionally kept the camp indoors every night for a month by getting off with a Kaffir.

The clerk went to the scene of the tragedy accompanied by the brother-in-law of the victim, my instructions being to the effect that he was to verify the statement that the man had really been killed, and to collect as much information bearing on the case as would satisfy me that there had been no foul play.

When he arrived at the spot the corpse had been buried. The clerk had the body exhumed, and proceeded to hold a *post-mortem*. With his dirk he slashed the corpse in the most horrible manner, and took out the heart to satisfy himself that the bullet had really penetrated that organ. The incident caused the utmost indignation among the diggers, and I reported the matter to the Government, but nothing more was heard of it. He was without exception the most provokingly stupid official I ever met, and was constantly doing the most outrageous things which caused loss and inconvenience. He held the office of Customs Collector, and on one occasion allowed seventeen waggon-loads of gin to pass without collecting the duty, which amounted to some hundreds of pounds. When I asked for an explanation he coolly remarked that the sum was so large that he was afraid to ask the importer for it lest he should get angry and thrash him. I reported this to headquarters, but was not favoured with a reply.

Another of this individual's feats took the shape of a *post-mortem*, of which he seemed particularly fond. He had been sent to inquire into the

circumstances attending the death of a Kaffir, and had the body exhumed. On his return I noticed a horrible stench proceeding from his waggon, and on asking the cause he replied, "It's that nigger's head." In a bucket suspended beneath the waggon was the decomposed head of the Kaffir, which he had hacked off with a spade and brought along to satisfy me that the owner of it was "really dead."

I tried my best to get the man exalted to some other sphere of usefulness, but in vain. He was a special *protégé* of the Hollander State Secretary, and I afterwards found that my frequent letters of complaint had never been shown to the Government. Fortunately he later on committed an offence which was more serious in the eyes of the Government than any dereliction of duty or excess of zeal. He had taken part in a merrymaking with some English diggers, and had joined them in singing "God save the Queen." The hideous crime was proved to the hilt, and I was never more satisfied with the British national hymn in my life, for the culprit was dismissed on the spot.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Boer and the native—Secret of the race hatred—Side lights on slavery—Boer methods—The case of April—Abel Erasmus, the Kaffirs' Terror—His policy—Captain Schiel—King David a white man.

It is extremely difficult for the average Englishman to realise and appreciate the mental attitude of a Transvaal Boer towards the Kaffir—as difficult as it is to convince the Boer that the Kaffir is not a creature ordained by Heaven to be his servant and the object of his contempt and loathing. Consciously or otherwise, the Doppler has always acted as though it was his bounden duty to visit upon the native of to-day the sins and crimes perpetrated by his forbears in resisting the invasion of the whites. Doubtless the Afrikaner suffered very considerably from the native in the early times, but the feud has been perpetuated long beyond the period when reprisals are either just or logical.

It is true that we do not hear in the Transvaal to-day anything like the stories of horrible maltreatment of the native with which the history of Cape Colony abounds. Masters there do not bake their recalcitrant Kaffirs as old Paul de Villiers of the Cape Colony did, nor do they adopt the old colonial method of rebuking disobedient slaves by putting them into a spike-lined barrel and rolling them down hill. But though the

methods have changed, the spirit that prompted their adoption remains. No Boer jury would ever have thought of convicting another Boer for killing a Kaffir, in the improbable event of his being committed for trial for such an act, while as to beating or robbing them of their wages, the practice was a domestic institution, and, according to Boer ideas, is part and parcel of a necessary system of keeping the Kaffir in his proper place—which is to serve his Boer master and to accept anything with humility that he pleases to give him, from twenty-five lashes with the sjambok to a cheque on the Bank of the Nile in discharge of a year's arrears of wages.

In no single instance did the Transvaal Government do anything having for its object the improvement or amelioration of the natives' condition. Every bit of legislation ever passed has been restrictive. It is true that a rigorous law has been enacted intended to prevent the Kaffir obtaining intoxicating liquor, but its aim was primarily to protect the employer from the loss and inconvenience resulting from drunken labourers. It is the wretched native who has suffered most from this presumably protective law, for while he has been lashed and imprisoned for indulging in the forbidden luxury, the scoundrels who supplied him have amassed fortunes, and at the worst been subjected to ridiculously inadequate penalties, which have been equivalent to fining a man five shillings for stealing a hundred.

Theoretically the Kaffir does possess certain rights which are supposed to protect him from ill-usage, but unfortunately the Kaffir's ideas of what constitutes cruelty are not shared by those to whom he has to appeal. It was the rarest thing in the old days to see a white man prosecuted for an offence against a Kaffir. I can recall but one or two instances, and in each case the object of the prosecution was not so much the championship of the native as an attempt to punish his assailant for something else.

As a case in point, a year or two ago three white men—Englishmen, I am sorry to say—were convicted and lashed for a series of brutal assaults and robberies on Kaffirs returning from the mines to their homes. These highway robberies had grown so frequent that natives were refusing to come to the mines to work, as they knew on returning with their hard-earned wages they were liable to be robbed and half killed. Consequently native labour became so scarce that the mines were paying premiums of £3 10s. and £4 per head for boys supplied by the native labour agents. Then it was that in self defence the mining industry, through its representative, the Chamber of Mines, took up the matter, and the highwaymen were arrested—not, however, by the State police, but by the private police of the Chamber. It is worthy of note, too, that notwithstanding the fact that the systematic holding up and maltreatment of Kaffirs was as old as native labour in the mines itself, no one ever dreamt of

protecting the victims until the pockets of the shareholders suffered through the outrages. It was in this indirect way that eventually a measure of justice was done.

For example, it was a matter of common knowledge that certain farmers were in the habit of shooting and robbing natives who passed through solitary parts of the country on their return from the Kimberley diamond mines. One family of notorious Boer bandits carried the practice to a fine art. A batch of homeward bound natives, carrying their two or three years' earnings, and may be a stolen diamond or two, would be shot down on entering the farm lands of these scoundrels. The next batch would be captured, set to dig the graves for and bury the first batch, and were then themselves put out of the way. Improbable as this story may appear, it would be easy enough to procure the conviction of the cowardly murderers, who were still living before the war. Under the old *régime* the chance of getting a prosecution was so remote that no one dared move in the matter, for the murderers had great influence with the Government, which consequently winked at atrocities quite as great perpetrated by the same men.

Two cases illustrating the attitude of the Executive in regard to the ill-treatment of Kaffirs caused a little attention on the Rand two years ago. A farmer by way of punishing a Kaffir who had annoyed him, tied him to his horse's tail and dragged him over the stoniest portions of

his farm till the poor wretch's bowels protruded. He then reported the matter to the Field Cornet, who inspected the corpse, and signed a declaration that the Kaffir had died from heart disease! The Government were acquainted with the facts, but accepted the Field Cornet's certificate as a complete exculpation of the murderer—nothing more was done.

It may come as a surprise to many to learn that slavery existed in the Transvaal up to the declaration of war. It is true the law does not recognise it, but so far it has only once been put in force to discountenance it. An inquiry, if properly and strictly carried out, would reveal the fact that there were till the downfall of the *régime* Kaffirs, male and female, who were owned by Boers, and even by officials, and as much the slaves of their masters as if they had been bought in the open market in the old slave days of the Colony. I am acquainted with several such cases, and could with very little trouble find out hundreds more, where Kaffirs were held in service against their wills and treated worse than the old-time slaves, for the very sufficient reason that while a slave-owner will hesitate to injure a Kaffir he has paid a large price for, he is deterred by no such consideration towards a free servant, who can be replaced with very little inconvenience.

The methods of holding a Kaffir whose services are valuable are, thanks to the Pass Law, many. The simplest is to withhold the boy's wages and pass, threatening him with the consequences of

attempting to abscond. It may be said that the Kaffir has the right to appeal to the Field Cornet or the nearest Landdrost; but such an appeal would partake of the nature of the sheep going to the wolf for protection. No Field Cornet would think of deciding a case against a Boer where a Kaffir was the complainant. To do such a thing would be to ride rough-shod over the first, the most sacred, and the strongest traditions of Boer sentiment. To begin with, to decide in favour of the Kaffir would be to take his word in preference to that of his master, an outrage no Boer ever dared to perpetrate except with the express intention of making an enemy for life of the farmer. The very act of going off the farm to seek redress constitutes desertion, and is punishable by lashes, a fate that has overtaken more than one unfortunate native who was ill-advised enough to absent himself even to this limited extent.

In remote districts the Boer was a supreme autocrat on his own farm. He was miles away from his nearest neighbour, and the chance of interference was as unlikely as if the parties were alone in mid-ocean. The Kaffir was fully conscious of his helplessness, and having fallen into the hands of a "bad baas," his only remedy was flight. This last resort the conditions of the Pass Law rendered extremely difficult to adopt. The runaway was certain to come upon some Boer who would demand his pass, and, rightly guessing the facts of the case, take possession

of the Kaffir, who would only have jumped out of the frying-pan into the fire.

This business was brought prominently before the public in 1895, when a Boer was summoned to appear before the High Court to show cause why he should not be restrained from detaining a Kaffir woman and her children. The action was brought on behalf of the husband, a Kaffir named April, well advanced in years, who had been held in slavery since youth by the farmer. He had several times essayed his escape, and had been recaptured and brutally flogged, eventually, however, getting clear away. It is worthy of note that the action was brought by a rival and unfriendly neighbour, not solely to obtain the freedom of the woman and her children, but because April had agreed to let his family serve their new master freely if he succeeded in securing their release. The Court ordered the farmer to give up the woman and her children, and so strong was the feeling among the Boers in favour of the slave holder that the Government actually paid the costs of the loser, which amounted to a large sum, and this despite the fact that the defendant was a wealthy man, and well able to afford to pay his own expenses.

The most usual and least troublesome method of profiting by a Kaffir's service without paying for it was to postpone paying him for as long as possible, and then find an excuse for giving him a severe thrashing, which would be repeated until the unfortunate wretch ran away, preferring

to take the risks of being found without a pass from his late employer to being flagellated to death. This treatment was not the exclusive monopoly of the Boer. It was largely practised in the early railway days, when the contractors found it an excellent method for increasing their profits. At the end of the month the Kaffirs employed on the construction works would be assembled for pay. As each boy came up for his wage the contractor would ask—

“What’s he earned?”

“Fifty shillings.”

“What sort of boy is he?”

“Not very good.”

“Give him a sovereign.”

And if the boy demurred he was helped to make up his mind with a pick shaft.

The English miners on the Rand and European employers of Kaffir labour soon fell in with Boer methods. They were almost as exempt from the consequences of injustice to a native as the Boers themselves. The lower class English miners, rejoicing in their first taste of authority, were notoriously brutal to the Kaffirs under them, as a case in the Landdrost Court at Johannesburg now and again proved.

In the districts where the natives continued to follow their pristine conditions of life they were controlled by an official known as a Native Commissioner. His powers were well-nigh unlimited, and so long as he regularly remitted to Pretoria a reasonable sum as the result of his

collection of the hut tax the Government never interfered with him. He was king of the region, and it is easy to imagine how such an authority can be abused by an unscrupulous man, strong in the knowledge that no white man is near enough to see his acts, and that even if his conduct is criticised the Government is practically pledged by Boer tradition and usage to uphold its representative.

For many years the Native Commissioner in the Lydenburg district—the largest area in the Transvaal occupied by Kaffirs—had been Abel Erasmus, a remarkable Boer character, whose name was one of terror to the natives not only in his own reserve, but for many miles around. He was a huge, masterful man, the embodiment of all that was best and worst in the old voortrekkers, and he regarded the Kaffir as the natural enemy of the Boer, and himself as a Heaven-ordained instrument for maintaining the supremacy of the white.

Erasmus was immensely wealthy, his farms alone totalling thousands of acres, while he had long ago ceased to count his cattle. How this vast herd had been accumulated I had ample opportunity of seeing, for when I was at the Kantoor I was in his district. He would arrive unexpectedly in a Kaffir kraal, and demand payment of hut tax, ten shillings for each hut. Now, a Kaffir's bank is always some secret hiding-place, to which he goes only at night, or when certain that he is unobserved; so when suddenly

called upon to produce his half sovereign he would ask for time to obtain it. This was just what Erasmus wanted. The required delay would be peremptorily refused, and the escort ordered to seize an ox or cow. It was in vain that the Kaffir pleaded for even an hour's delay. I have seen them bring the money within an hour or two of the seizure. Erasmus refused to accept the tender. The ox, worth £5 on an average, would be driven to the Commissioner's farm, with perhaps fifty others similarly extorted, and ten shillings per head may have been remitted to Pretoria.

In the event of the Kaffir having neither cash nor cattle, he would be tied up and given twenty-five lashes. The stories of the cruelty and general oppression of Erasmus are common in the Transvaal, and the terror inspired by the name among the natives was almost ludicrous. One had only to pronounce it to a Kaffir in the district to make him jump with fright, and when at the Kantoer I have frequently had my Kaffirs hesitate to obey my orders, and when asked the reason they have frankly admitted that as they feared Erasmus more than they did me, they wanted to be satisfied that he would not disapprove.

Second only in rank in Kaffir estimation was Captain Schiel, when Native Commissioner in the Spelonkin, a densely peopled district in the north-east of the Transvaal. The record of his cruel reign as king and tyrant is almost without

parallel. A nephew of mine was once at a wayside store in the district when a waggon drove up. Tied behind it in a painful position were two Kaffir girls. Presently a Kaffir arrived in pursuit of his wife, who was one of the captives. She had been seized by the Commissioner for arrears of hut tax. The husband had just cut the girl free, when Captain Schiel arrived and demanded to know who had released the woman. On the Kaffir claiming his wife, Schiel tied the boy to a tree and kicked him to death, and carried off the girl. My nephew reported the matter to Pretoria, but of course no notice was taken of such a triviality; but a little later Schiel had the informer arrested on some trumped-up charge. Fortunately my influence at Pretoria was as great as Schiel's, and my nephew was released. Like Erasmus, this autocrat amassed wealth by methods easier guessed than described.

It is not too much to say that under Boer domination the rights of the native were a mere phrase; such justice as he gets is the result of accident rather than intention, and a future Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe would find it easy without drawing on the imagination to outvie the horrors of another "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

I am fully aware that the tendency of the average Englishman—at home—is to go to the opposite extreme, and place the Kaffir in a position which would be as harmful to the object of his solicitude as it would be to us who are in intimate relationship with him. The solution of the

native problem must be found between the two ideas of undue severity and maudlin false kindness. New-comers are too apt to draw erroneous conclusions from comparisons between the negro of America and his brother in Africa. It must not be forgotten that the former is three hundred years further advanced in the scale of civilisation, and it is absurd to apply the same standard of treatment to the comparatively civilised and the raw, unformed article.

The American negro has associated with whites for generations; our native comes to us straight from his kraal, and looks on civilisation for the first time the day he enters our service. Thousands of the Kaffirs who provide the muscle for the mines of the Rand are very little advanced beyond the period when the mighty Chaka ruled the destinies of savage South Africa, and unfortunately the instinct of the savage is to imitate and absorb the vices of the white rather than his virtues, which are not always in evidence—on the Rand, at any rate. The Boer has done absolutely nothing to educate or elevate the native. Missions he discourages, and a recent conference of Dutch Reformed Church Ministers passed a resolution deprecating such work, and declaring their opinion that it was superfluous from a Christian point of view. Such religious teaching as the Boer has tolerated has always had for its objective inculcation of the one great doctrine—the supremacy of the white man, and the necessarily debased origin and condition of

the black. How thoroughly this idea is impregnated is amusingly illustrated by the following true story.

A native preacher was exhorting his fellow blacks with the story of David. Naturally he had to mention the name of the patriarch very often. His master overheard him, and, stopping the preacher, addressed him—"Look here, David was a white man, so you must say 'Baas David,' or I'll sjambok you."

During the rest of the discourse the Psalmist was respectfully referred to in the terms of the amendment.

CHAPTER XV.

More official eccentricities—How we appointed the Hangman—
Raw Burghers at drill—The Boer code of words of command
—A juvenile Road Inspector—Paul Kruger's *gaucheries*—
A narrow escape from war—The episode of the Deacon's
boot—The widower and his achter ox.

THERE is little doubt that the new *régime* will deal very summarily with the delightful custom popular in the old days of appointing wholesale youthful and generally incompetent sons of the soil to well-paid Government billets. This has been so long a recognised safety valve for the increasing Burgher families that the Boers will find it hard to reconcile themselves to the new conditions, and I anticipate a widespread disappointment when the Boer finds that a public office in the Civil Service is not to be regarded as an asylum for those afflicted in pocket and intellect. This craze for appointments under the Government began with the State's inability to pay salaries. Some of the earlier appointments were so outrageously grotesque that even in the light of recent examples the facts are scarcely to be credited. Postmasters who could not read; chief Road Inspectors who did not know what a properly constructed highway was like, such a valuable institution never having come into the range of their vision; artillery officers who had never seen a gun; and similarly

inappropriate fitting of round pegs into square holes, were of frequent occurrence and called for no comment. I must plead guilty to having been the means of securing one man an appointment for which he had no previous experience, though I console myself by the reflection that I might have done infinitely worse.

My brother and myself were travelling in an out-of-the-way district. We had been without food for many hours, and hailed with delight the prospect of relief afforded by the sight of a distant farmhouse. On the way we remarked an old man standing with his ear against a telegraph pole. We inquired the reason. "Man, but the Government is busy to-day," he answered, still listening to the vibrations of the wires; "the messages *are* going through fast."

We were too eager for food to pause to learn the nature of the messages, so hurried on to the farmhouse. We found the sole occupant an old and anything but amiable vrouw. To our request to be provided with food she gave an emphatic refusal. Not only did she meet us with the all-sufficient statement that she had nothing in the house, but, furthermore, her husband was away. We tried cajoling the old lady in the most approved manner of Boer-taming, but our jocularly only increased her wrath. My brother, who was an adept in the art of conciliating an angry vrouw, found himself entirely worsted, so had to resort to stratagem. He succeeded in gaining access to the kitchen, where bread and

meat were visible, and in spite of the old lady's abuse we were proceeding to commandeer and pay for the food, when our ancient friend of the telegraph pole arrived, and proved to be the husband. The vrouw poured out her list of woes, and was inciting her husband to resort to force, when I mentioned that my brother was a member of the Pretoria Town Board. The announcement had an immediate soothing effect upon the old gentleman.

"In that case," said he, "you can find me a Government appointment." He proceeded to explain that he was now old and unable to make his farm support him; therefore he thought it was the duty of the Government to procure him a post. As he had kindly permitted us to have some food on paying for it, we felt in honour bound to assist the old fellow in obtaining his desire, and promised on our return to Pretoria to interest ourselves in his behalf. We did so, and our efforts were attended with success. It happened that the post of hangman was vacant. We thought of the man who had helped us on our road with such true hospitality, and in due course he was placed in a position to assist others on a longer journey, and he filled the office to the satisfaction of his clients and the Government to the end.

When the Staats Artillerie was formed, one of the principal sources of amusement to many of us was to watch the drill. The law required that every private should be a Burgher. Consequently

the members of the corps were the rawest of the raw, youths fresh from the farm. Not only had they no motion of drill, but even their instructors had but hazy ideas as to how to move their men when once they had got them in line. Nor was the difficulty lessened by the absence of words in the Taal capable of representing the military words of command. The drill instructor therefore had to invent his own, and naturally pressed into his service such words and phrases as appealed most directly to the simple-minded son of the soil. The words were largely drawn from the phraseology of the farm. "Halt!" for example, was expressed by the Taal equivalent for the "Woa!" addressed to a horse; "Forward!" by "Gee up!" in the vernacular; "Quick march!" by "Make as if you were plovers," the South African plover having a peculiar military strut with head erect, that came nearest to what the drill instructor imagined the real thing must look like to a Boer. The order to "present!" required considerable circumlocution. It ran, "Make as if you were going to shoot, but don't shoot"—("Maak zoo as je schiet, mar moennie schiet ne"). The position assumed by the soldier standing at ease suggested the attitude of a knee-haltered horse—that is, the head of the animal fastened by the halter to the knee. Therefore when the Staats Artillerie man was told to "stand like a knee-haltered horse," he knew that he had to bend one knee and strike a grotesquely uneasy position.

The young Boer never took kindly to drill, and to this day the evolutions of the Staats Artillerie, despite the presence and efforts of well-trained German instructors, are very much of the go-as-you-please order.

Perhaps as amusing an instance of official incompetency as any connived at by the Government was the appointment of a youth of twenty-two as Chief Road Inspector of the whole country. Not only was young Malan far below the standard of intelligence of the Transvaal lad of his age, but his short life had been spent in the capital of Boer ignorance and seclusion, Rustenburg, where the only roads he could ever have seen were the tracks made by the passage of ox waggons. To this raw youth was entrusted the superintendence of the highways of the country, a post of such importance that not every trained engineer would necessarily fill it with satisfaction.

I frequently used to wonder how the contractors whose tenders for road-making were accepted managed to make a profit, for I have estimated the cost from the published specification, and on comparing it with the price quoted by the contractor have found it show a big loss to him. A friend of mine discovered how it was done, and the secret was out. Tenders would be called for, and on a given day those who purposed tendering would be taken over the site of the road by the Chief Inspector, who would explain in detail what was required to be done. At a subsequent meeting he would show the person

whose tender it had been secretly arranged to accept what portions of the work might be left out, and which scamped. Under these circumstances it was not surprising that the man who put in a very low tender contrived to come out with a profit, in which the Inspector shared.

It was this system of official connivance at scamped contract work that caused the disaster which nearly cost Lady Loch her life on the occasion of Sir Henry Loch's first visit to Pretoria. A grand stand had been erected by a Hollander contractor, which collapsed during the reception ceremony, seriously injuring eight or ten persons, among them being Lady Loch and the wife of General Joubert, who fell under the bulky form of President Kruger. The intense dislike for the Head of the State manifested by Mrs. Joubert dates from that occasion.

An incident that occurred during Sir Henry's visit to the Boer capital came very near precipitating war between the Transvaal and England. The Governor's carriage no sooner came into the midst of a crowd of enthusiastic Englishmen than they proceeded to take out the horses and hoist Union Jacks over it. The carriage being a closed one, the crowd attempted to open it, but President Kruger, who was with the Governor, for some reason objected, and attempted to prevent the hood being let down. I was on horseback, and standing near the mounted police, when I was astonished by hearing the officer in charge order his men to load their rifles. He

had mistaken the waving of the Union Jacks and the opening of the carriage for a demonstration that had resulted, or was about to result, in the annexation of the country. Fortunately the crowd became quieter, which reassured the policeman, or he would not have hesitated to order his men to fire.

President Kruger was never a ladies' man, and it must be confessed that he has never made any attempt to ingratiate himself with the sex. On the contrary, his bearing towards them has always been brusque and unmannerly. He never allowed the presence of women to check his speech and modes of expression on any subject, and there are several instances on record of his having made remarks before an assembly of both sexes that have given husbands and fathers cause for satisfaction that the official language was not English.

At the time I was drafting the Gold Law I happened to make an afternoon call at the house of an official. There were several ladies present, and among the callers was the President. On greeting me he immediately began to speak about the work on which I was engaged, and, utterly regardless of the presence of the ladies, explained that he wanted certain clauses introduced for the control of the social evil in proclaimed districts. In discussing the subject he employed the vigorous language of Scripture, with words and phrases that are not usually written or spoken if they can be provided with a synonym.

There are many stories of President Kruger's rudeness and his disregard of the conventions and susceptibilities of others. I do not remember to have seen the following in print. While on an official visit to Bloemfontein in 1887 he was induced to attend a concert. He exhibited considerable impatience throughout, but restrained himself until a lady rendered a florid soprano operatic air. Then he rose and passed out, muttering loudly enough to be heard by performer and audience, "If I want to hear a wild cat shriek I can go out into the Veldt."

On the occasion that he entertained Mr. Hoffmeyr, the distinguished leader of the Bond, the waiter served the guest first. Paul Kruger angrily snatched up the plate of soup and roared out, "I am President of the State," a fact he never allowed anyone to lose sight of, for he never hesitated to assert his position like the traditional new deacon. I might mention that the latter personage ranks high in the Dutch Reformed Church, so that the office is much sought after, and aspirants miss no opportunity to bring themselves prominently before the rest of the congregation. This is generally effected by arriving late but regularly at kirk, and wearing boots that squeak very audibly. The great day in the career of an ambitious Elder is the first Sunday he takes office. He has a new suit of black clothes made for the occasion, and a pair of boots whose squeak must have a range that will reach all over the usually very large church.

At the Paarl in my youth I well recollect how the day of the exaltation of one Elder proved the day of his greatest humiliation. He had been particularly emphatic in impressing upon the shoemaker the necessity for making the shoes champion squeakers. This is done by inserting a piece of loose leather between the welt and sole, the squeak being caused by the friction of the leather over and under it. It happened that the shoemaker was a bit of a wag, and probably also—a rare thing in the Colony—an infidel. Anyhow, his respect for an Elder of the Dutch Reformed Church must have been very rudimentary, for he inserted the friction piece in one boot only. The result may be imagined. When the new Elder marched up the aisle in all the glory of new office and new clothes his progress was heralded by the most extraordinarily irregular and lop-sided squeak ever heard. Such an upsetting of tradition was too much for the equanimity of the congregation, and people smiled widely and universally, while whole families of youngsters had to be ejected for profaning the sanctuary by unseemly mirth. There are two great secrets that exercised the congregation for many a day after that never-to-be-forgotten Sunday. There was not a man or woman of them who would not have given much to know what the Predikant said to the Elder after the service, and what the Elder said to the shoemaker. For myself I would give much to know; I would even surrender that which a Boer prizes highly, one of my achter oxen—the two

oxen that pull on the pole of the waggon. How much the Boer values them was expressed by the old farmer who lost his wife after many years of a particularly placid existence. "It must be a great loss to you," suggested a sympathetic friend.

"It is," was the reply. "Man, I'd as lief have lost one of my achter oxen."

CHAPTER XVI.

The Transvaal an unexplored treasure store—Rider Haggard's imaginings, Transvaal realities—An underground river—A white native Queen—A dead chief's treasure cave—Relics of ancient days at De Kantoor—A masonic jewel of the dim past—A Phœnician tomb—Albesini, the white chief—The German's secret—Lost and derelict reefs—Why rich reefs were neglected—The mystery of the De Kaap formation—Alluvial finds near Johannesburg—Why Boers did not encourage prospecting—Some strange discoveries—The papers of Carl Mauch—Rubies, emeralds, opals, sapphires, and diamonds in the Transvaal—Rich properties with family titles.

Most Afrikanders in the Transvaal and many of the later comers who have travelled much over the country, or have had opportunities for getting on familiar and confidential terms with the older farmers, have heard at various times stories and more or less vague reports of the existence of little known, unworked deposits of gold, silver, copper, tin, arsenic, platinum, diamonds, opals, and, in short, practically every metal or mineral of value. There are few prospectors who have not some such story to tell, and more than one has broken his heart in a vain endeavour to induce capitalists to help him profit by his secret. Probably a large percentage of these finds would prove on examination to have been greatly exaggerated, but of one thing there can be no doubt—there are many valuable secrets awaiting disclosure.

To many men the romantic imaginings of Mr. Rider Haggard present more of prose than poetry. The underground lake described in "Alan Quartermain" becomes very real to those who have studied the watershed of the Rand, and there are few intelligent farmers who do not believe that the magnificent stream appropriately named Wonderfontein, and the equally puzzling water supply that emerges from the unexplored cavern at Blaauwbank, west of Krugersdorp, have not their origin in some vast subterranean lake. Even the weird and fantastic "She" herself has a parallel if not a prototype in the very real "Invisible Queen" of the Majagees, whom Commandant Schalk Burger unearthed in the flesh from her secret cave, as narrated elsewhere.

Again, what traveller who knows Basutoland and its wonderful people has not heard of the rich diamond field there, which is so carefully guarded and preserved in its virginity by the king that it is death for white or black, save the keepers of its secret, to put foot within the sacred enclosure?

Who can say how many valuable finds remain undeveloped through the death or disappearance of their discoverers? The district of De Kaap is full of such traditions, and my notebooks contain the official records of scores of such cases, which, from the causes suggested, have never passed beyond the initial stage of location. Again and again have I in my official capacity been made the recipient of such confidences by farmers who,

either through distrust of the Uitlander, or in hopes of retaining the secret for the exclusive benefit of their families, have rejected tempting offers to impart their knowledge of the wealth contained in some unsuspected portion of their remote and extensive farms. I know of several Kaffir chiefs who, were they but induced to talk, could reveal secrets that probably will die with them instead of adding to the wealth of the world.

Of one of these mysterious stories I have had personal experience, and it has always had a peculiar fascination for me. When I was at De Lange's farm in 1885, waiting to escort President Kruger on his first visit to De Kaap Gold Fields, an aged Kaffir presented himself. He was quite grey, and as the native does not whiten about the head until he is over seventy, I reckoned this man was well on towards being a centenarian. He was a remnant of one of the tribes that have become extinct, or have been absorbed into those of their conquerors. He told us that he had come to see the President, in order to impart to him a secret that now rightly belonged to him, "as he is now our king," as the old Kaffir expressed it. His story was this:—

His father and his grandfather, and the whole line of his ancestors as far as tradition carried them back, had been prime ministers, or chief indunas, in his tribe, and by virtue of their position were trustees and custodians of a great royal secret. That secret was the whereabouts of a cavern whence was extracted the gold that was

taken to Delagoa Bay and exchanged for such commodities as the Royal Kraal required. The old man stated that as a boy he had assisted his father in extracting the gold from the cave, where it was found in vast quantities. He was the sole living depositary of the secret, and as he felt he had not long to live he deemed it his duty to hand over the trust to the man whom he regarded as the successor of the defunct kings.

President Kruger gave an impatient hearing to the old man, treating him with that brusque and brutal curtness that he always metes out to natives. When I suggested that the story was worth investigating, particularly as the old man asked for or expected no reward, the President replied that he had matters of more importance to engage his attention. A year later I was in Pretoria when the same old fellow arrived and tried hard to get an interview with the President on the subject of his secret. Had he been a supplicant for a favour instead of the grantor he could not have been treated more contemptuously. The President at length offered to send one of his relations to see the cave, but the Kaffir declined the offer. It was a king's secret, he said, and as such could not be imparted to a subordinate, and so the matter fell through. If the old fellow be still living, he may yet be induced to part with his secret to a representative of another and greater chief; failing that, as the locality of the cave is

known within a few miles, it may yet be discovered by someone.

Much has yet to be said concerning the theory that has fascinated so many travellers and explorers in South Africa—I refer to the pretty generally accepted belief that the regions now known as gold-producing were perhaps better known to the ancients—whoever they may have been. Every now and again something turns up which, if it does not throw much light on the matter, at least helps to confirm the idea that we are not the original discoverers of the gold reefs of this portion of the African continent. In 1884 a young man named Paskin applied to me for the necessary permission to sink a shaft in a forest on Government ground, in order to test a theory he held as to the source of the alluvial deposit in De Kaap Valley. I gave the required permit, and a month later visited the spot to see what was going on. Paskin was just being hauled to the surface, carrying in his hand a small object, which we both took to be a nugget. On scraping it and removing its casing of alluvial cement, we were surprised to find a small square locket. It opened on a rough hinge, much after the manner of modern ornaments. On one side was a piece of parchment, inscribed with unrecognisable characters; on the other, beneath a piece of mica, was a lock of human hair. The outside of the case was engraved with certain figures, which were later identified as Masonic symbols. The curious relic was later on lent to the W.M. of the

Masonic Lodge of the Order at Barberton, and exhibited to a large number of persons likely to throw light upon it. It is now in the possession of Mr. Paskin, of Johannesburg. The spot at which the locket was discovered was seventeen feet below the surface of the forest.

Near the same place was also found a block of polished black stone, bearing an inscription engraved in some unfamiliar characters, the letters being filled in with metal. Unfortunately, there was never any expert examination, for the farmer who found it saw nothing in it beyond a toy for his children, by whom it was either lost or destroyed.

Another very interesting relic of these mysterious and much-debated "ancients" consists in a stone coffin or tomb cut out of the solid rock on a ledge 2,000 feet above the plain between Lydenburg and De Kaap. The grave—if such it be—is fitted with a massive stone lid or cover, engraved with characters which the discoverers said looked very like what they had seen described as Phœnician. The average miner is too matter-of-fact a being to be impressed by such evidences of antiquity; consequently this tomb has remained unopened, no one feeling sufficient interest to run the risk of toiling at the task on a ledge where only a vulture could feel at home.

On other occasions small quantities of nuggets have been discovered in basin-shaped hollows, which apparently formed the temporary storehouse of these early gold-seekers. They had

covered the pile with a large rock, and thus left the hoard to be discovered by nineteenth century prospectors.

I have frequently been told stories of similar antiquarian finds by diggers and prospectors in De Kaap district; but unless there happened to be something particularly striking about it, or it resulted in a find of gold, the matter excited no real interest. The eager quest of gold blinded the prospector to everything that did not bear directly on his one great object. Even the better educated digger who had come upon such evidences rarely deemed them worthy of more than a casual allusion, while the average farmer would probably regard the discovery of the original Ark as merely a fortuitous addition to his stock of sawn timber, useful for the occasional repairs of the homestead, and would keep the secret to himself.

Another curious and puzzling find, affording evidence of a very high degree of civilisation on the part of the "ancient" explorers of De Kaap, took place within a few yards of my office at the Kantoor. Running into the side of a steep hill was the remains of a tunnel, which was opened up in the course of prospecting work, when the diggers unearthed two earthenware pipes about three feet long and six inches in diameter. They had most of the signs one looks for in ancient pottery, and were obviously of very great age. They were examined, provided a nine days' wonder, and then shared the fate of the

marvellous engraved stone, and were either lost or destroyed.

This and other discoveries of supposed antiquities created a passing interest in the subject. Among the other objects found was a very curious polished ox horn. It was beautifully engraved or carved with figures in relief. The remarkable feature of these carvings was that they represented men fighting and working, but with weapons unknown to the South African native, and resembling the weapons in the hands of the angular warriors we see in Egyptian frescoes, sculptures, and hieroglyphics. This horn was handed over to Mr. Ede, a well-known Barbertonian. The Kaffir who gave it said it had been the property of his grandfather's grandfather and of many grandfathers beyond them.

Among the natives in the district—who numbered about 20,000, and, unlike the Kaffir generally, were very hazy as to their origin—I came upon an old chief who told me that very many years before, a white man had come to the country and died there, leaving a box in his charge. I went to the hut, and was shown an old japanned tin box. On opening it I was surprised to find nothing but a quantity of old coloured religious prints. They were probably the stock-in-trade of some wandering Roman Catholic priest who had penetrated to these remote fastnesses on an evangelising mission; or maybe he was one of those recluses who have

forsworn civilisation and intended to settle among the natives as far as possible out of touch with whites.

Among such was the Portuguese Albesini, who settled in the Zoutpansberg district in the early part of the century, and became a white chief of immense influence among the Kaffirs. He was in every sense King of the Zoutpansberg, and such powerful chiefs as Magato and Malaboch paid homage to him. The estate which he formed there is beautiful in the extreme, practically everything that the climate will produce being cultivated. He and his wife never visited the haunts of civilisation, and he remained on his estate till his death at an advanced age. His grave is still kept in repair by the Kaffirs, who frequently visit it, and observe the custom of laying green fresh grass upon it.

As a general rule these recluses have accumulated wealth in considerable quantities, mainly in cattle, which in South Africa increase and multiply with the minimum of attention, so that in the absence of an epidemic, such as rinderpest or lung sickness, the increase of stock is merely a matter of time. In most of the cases that have come under my notice these voluntary exiles have not been prompted in the first instance by any hope or desire of making money, but by a yearning for a life of freedom and solitude, or the gratification of that love of hunting which is a passion that not even the inexhaustible game supply of these regions can satiate.

I recall one exception. A German and his wife squatted in an almost inaccessible valley, well out of the beaten track, near Pietersburg, where they erected a small dwelling, and, so far as their few and distant neighbours knew and believed, led a life of isolation and penury. The man was rarely seen in the nearest village, and on the few occasions on which a stray visitor turned up at the house, he was told that the master was in some distant part of the district.

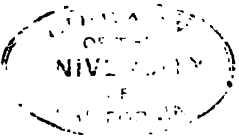
About two years later the man called on two friends of mine who were almost his only acquaintances, and announced that he was leaving the country; but before going he wished to impart to them a secret by way of recompense for certain kindnesses they had extended to him in former years. He told them that on the property he had occupied was a kloof, or gully, rich with an alluvial deposit. For two years he had secretly worked it, laboriously conveying the gravel to his house, where he panned it in a back bedroom during the day, removing the refuse to a distance at night. Often, he said, when a visitor had called and been told that the master was out, he was hard at work washing the soil in his bedroom. During the two years he had extracted £12,000 worth of gold, sufficient to secure him a comfortable old age, which he was then off to enjoy in the Vaterland. It appears that the gully was on the border of a proclaimed goldfield; hence the necessity for keeping the find secret.

The two friends went to the spot, and found everything as described, but they did not profit by the bequest; they were too much in fear of the Minister of Mines and his methods of taking advantage of such irregularities for his own personal benefit.

It is difficult in these days of payable six pennyweight reefs to realise how the prospectors of 1883, and even later, lightly discarded finds that to-day sound fabulous. My notebooks have numerous records of reefs discovered, the samples of which are still in my possession, and show them to be rich in the extreme. But in those days nothing was considered worth the trouble of pegging unless it showed visible gold freely. The prospector's idea of a find was nuggets, and failing them he required to see the gold studded over the quartz. He had neither time nor industry enough to collect a few hundredweight from a reef, carry it four or five miles to water, and pan it, on the chance of getting half an ounce or even an ounce to the ton. If the gold did not appear to the eye, he paid no attention to likely indications. Nor is this to be wondered at when it is remembered that the early finds in De Kaap yielded ounces where the Rand to-day gives pennyweights. If this was the case with the more or less experienced digger and prospector, how much less probable is it that the simple, ignorant farmer who found indications of gold on his farm would be impressed unless he saw the precious metal gleaming in concrete form!

It has taken several years to convince the average Boer that the outcropping ridges of rock on his property, over which he had worked every day for years, contained gold. He could not see it, and what he could not see he would not believe. More than one farmer has parted with his farm to prospectors, honestly but secretly believing that the purchaser had been deceived because no sign of gold was visible. Great as was the confidence reposed in me by the farmers in many districts of the Transvaal, it was often severely strained when I attempted to convince them that gold can exist in quartz in paying quantities without being plainly visible at first sight. This, combined with the innate distrust of the Uitlander who could not speak the Taal, explains why many rich reefs have remained undeclared or undiscovered till so late in the day. Another reason was to be found in the ineradicable objection of the farmers in the outlying districts to surrender their farms to the hated Rooinek, a motive so strong as to be even proof against the inducements of speedy wealth. Every mining man knows that there are scores of farms in the Transvaal through which run reefs of extraordinary richness, but no money could tempt the owners to allow their treasured lands to be alienated.

Quite recently a Kaffir in the service of a wealthy farmer between Johannesburg and Pretoria discovered and showed to his master a piece of quartz of amazing richness. The farmer had



hitherto never guessed the existence of gold on his farm, and, fearful lest the secret should leak out and the land financier profit by the discovery, he bound the boy to silence, and, to make assurance doubly sure, presented him with some heifers and a bonus on his wages, and had him escorted towards his kraal in the far north, threatening to shoot him should he return. I heard the story from the brother of the farmer, who did not share his sentimental objection to more wealth.

That this prejudice against parting with their farms, or allowing them in any way to be exploited by strangers, was genuine and intense is proved by the fact that it was no uncommon thing for a farmer to make provision in his will for guarding against the possibility, by binding his children not to allow the farm to be prospected. So far from regarding the discovery of a reef as a piece of good fortune, many farmers would look upon it as a distinct calamity, and take elaborate precautions to keep the secret, and I have frequently been consulted by Boers on the best method of averting the consequences of the discovery of a gold reef on their lands.

Just before the outbreak of the war I was travelling through a district where I am well known. At every halting place I found farmers who, hearing that I was in the district, had come to entrust me with the disposition of their property for the benefit of their families in the event of their falling in the war. It was a particularly sad trip, for most of these farmers I had known

for years, and I felt then that the farewell was in many cases a last one, and time has proved the truth of my foreboding. The confidences revealed at these interviews surprised me. Much as I believed I knew of the mineral resources of the Transvaal, I was amazed at the evidence of still vaster possibilities placed before me.

I found farmers in possession of the secret of the locality of not only gold reefs rich as anything yet seen on the Rand, but of tin, copper, arsenic, mica, fire-clay, asbestos, lead, coal, quicksilver, and even precious stones, the existence of which in the Transvaal has been a matter of dispute. These finds were not restricted to any particular district or line of country, but were scattered about in a manner that must later on necessitate a revision of the geological map of the Transvaal.

I was once informed of an incident which may be cited as an illustration not only of the difficulty the farmer has in getting his discoveries turned to profitable account on the Rand, on the rare occasions when he is so disposed, but why the innate prejudice against all that emanates from Johannesburg is accentuated and retained. A farmer in the Zoutpansberg district found a rich reef on his property. He loaded a Scotch cart with specimens, all showing visible gold, and journeyed to the City of the Reef, where he made an effort to enlist the aid of a capitalist in developing the undoubtedly valuable property. He was everywhere met by offers so

manifestly unfair and greedy that he was confirmed in the general opinion current among the farmers that the Johannesburg financier would look at nothing if he could not have more than the lion's share. Thoroughly disheartened, the farmer accepted an offer of £400 for his load, made by a jeweller, and returned home determined, whatever else happened, that no Rand financier should deprive him of his treasure. The specimens were considered striking enough to be exhibited in the window of the purchaser, but the property remains in its virgin condition. I heard this story at scores of farms, it being quoted as an example and warning against dealings with the professional Rand mining magnate, and I doubt not has had the effect of deterring more than one farmer from attempting to turn his discoveries to account. It will be hopeless for any Englishman to deal with a reef-owning farmer for many a day after the war, for to the natural distrust of the *bona fides* of the Uitlander will be added that racial antagonism that only those who know the Boer character can properly assay.

One of the most interesting finds I ever came upon was a quantity of papers, notes, and other voluminous memoranda made by the celebrated Carl Mauch. This accomplished and industrious German explorer was the first practical geologist who devoted his efforts to South Africa, and every fresh discovery made in the country, whether of minerals or precious stones, seems to

have been anticipated by this remarkable man. Mauch made Potchefstroom his base of operations, and it was there I came upon an aged English farmer who had accompanied the explorer on most of his journeys. Like many Transvaal farmers of the old school, he attached very little importance to any discovery, however valuable, regarding it as a matter of course. He had told me many things that caused me not only surprise, but a degree of scepticism. Then it was that he produced the papers which had been left with him by Mauch when he took his last trip to Europe, for the purpose of bringing one of his discoveries before the capitalists. It will be remembered that the explorer died in Berlin, and it is worthy of remark as an odd coincidence that he should have met his death in precisely the same way as that other African explorer—Emin Pasha—by falling from a balcony.

The stories of the old farmer, corroborated by the testimony of the notes of Mauch, inspired me with a desire to test them. I was at this time interested in a quest for precious stones, and as the farmer assured me Mauch had discovered opals and rubies in the Transvaal, I determined to follow up the clue. The farmer gave me a sketch route of the map taken by Mauch and himself on the occasion of the discovery of the gems, and supplemented it by topographical details which the South African has a marvellous faculty of retaining with accuracy. The story of Mauch's discovery of the ruby was this:—

The two were in the Rustenburg district. They had been two or three days without water, and were digging in the bed of a dry water-course, when Mauch picked up a ruby as big as the top of his thumb.

In describing the route the old man marked certain spots at which he said I would find lead, further on cinnabar, and still further opals. I followed the route given me with such detail, and found lead, cinnabar, and opals as described. I am therefore quite prepared to believe that rubies will be found at the spot whence Mauch obtained his specimen. Unfortunately, the Jameson Raid intervening at the period of my prospect, I had to abandon my search. The old farmer was alive at the breaking out of the war, and, though eighty years of age, he is hale and vigorous, and shows every sign of living long enough to hand his trust to the legal representatives of Carl Mauch, who will probably now learn for the first time of the existence of these valuable documents.

A very fine emerald was given me by the Field Cornet of Mapoch's country. At the time I did not know what the stone was, neither did the late General Joubert, who saw it in my collection, and asked for it. It was a very fine stone, being one and a-half inches long, an inch broad, and half an inch thick. I believe it is still in the possession of Mrs. Joubert.

In the course of the trip mentioned in this chapter, I was shown diamonds and other stones found on farms in various distinct districts.

In nearly every case the stones had been picked up by the wife of the farmer, who regarded them from their ornamental rather than their commercial aspect. In these cases, as in that of the gold reefs, the finders were slow to speak of their discovery, deterred by that vague, lurking dread that the declaration of the find would result in the loss of the farm. It was the same spirit which actuated President Kruger in his determined and successful refusal to proclaim the gold-fields in the neighbourhood of Pretoria—a spirit which was entirely misunderstood and misrepresented by the Uitlander. I can only compare it to the feeling that prevents the English owner of an ancient and historic estate from parting with his venerable heirlooms or his more venerable estate. Sentiment plays a much greater part in the Boer character than is generally supposed, in evidence of which I could cite numerous instances of families living on in abject or even squalid poverty who could become rich to-morrow if they would consent to hand over their farms to the stranger.

That the distrust felt by the farmers of the agents of Rand financial houses was not altogether without just reason there are very many incontestable evidences. The unsophisticated farmer was taken advantage of in the early days in the most impudent manner. Ability to trick a Boer has made the fortune of more than one man well known in Rand circles as an efficient agent. In fact, most of the Rand houses owe some of their

most successful deals to the services of such a one. Some of the stories have become stock "yarns," while many more are of so preposterous a character that few writers would dare run the risk of telling them, their reputation for veracity and even sanity would be so seriously compromised. During my last tour among the farmers I was shown several agreements so unfair and one-sided that they would never be upheld in any court of law, not even in the Transvaal. In one of them—purporting to be made by an agent on behalf of his principal—the principal was referred to throughout the document as "Mr. Millionaire, of Johannesburg." The farmer who had signed the agreement consulted me as to the standing and character of this "Mr. Millionaire."

I was once afforded an amusing illustration of the extent to which the Boer will trust one of his own people, however irresponsible he may be, in preference to the Uitlander of no matter how high a standing. I met in a distant dorp a young Transvaaler who had been dismissed from the public service as unfit to be trusted even there. He showed me no less than eighty contracts, giving him a free six months' option over no less than eighty-four farms, representing an area of 756 square miles. Had any Rand house acquired this right in the ordinary way it would have cost them between £8,000 and £9,000 cash for caution money alone. The man holding these extremely valuable rights did not possess a

shilling, yet he had obtained what an Eckstein or a Farrer could never have secured.

There is a huge field of enterprise on the Rand for the speculator in that tempting but expensive form of enterprise that entails fighting an action at law to establish a prior claim and title to certain property. It happens that there exist on the Rand several large tracts of land now in the occupation of mining companies which were never the property of those who sold them to the companies. Part of the farm Turffontein, which comprises some of the richest properties on the Fields, in the vicinity of Johannesburg, is very liable to have the title of the original vendor to the mining companies questioned. By a series of altering landmarks the confines of the property have been made to include, or otherwise as suited the vendor, land belonging to others. The amount at stake, should such an action be begun, would run into ten millions. It would have been begun long ago, but those prepared to fight the action were afraid that the High Court would be compelled to act up to what it had slavishly bound itself to do—obey the wishes of the Government in any judgment it might give. Now that an impartial court is assured it is quite possible that we shall see more than one attempt to establish a claim to valuable ground.

CHAPTER XVII.

My official tour through the Transvaal—Further revelations—Gold, silver, and precious stones—Iron, copper, tin, quicksilver, mica—A wonderful plastic granite—Melting stone, or natural glaze—A hint for agricultural development by steam plough.

FROM the early days at De Kaap one subject had always occupied a large share of my attention. This was the vast possibilities of the State, and the advisability of Government support and encouragement. I never let pass an opportunity for impressing on President Kruger the wisdom, and even duty, of the Executive in taking the mineral resources of the country more directly under their control; but my arguments carried very little weight, and were productive of nothing more than providing a clue for the Minister of Mines in his search after profitable transactions, either direct or indirect. The President plainly told me that he felt no interest in the gold industry, but that he regarded it as the source of the trouble that had overtaken the country. I noticed that he never blamed it for making him a millionaire and enriching his numerous relations as well as the whole crowd of hangers-on.

Among other matters I pointed out that many of the Burghers—"his Burghers," in whom he professed such paternal interest—had the potentialities of huge wealth on their properties, but,

for many reasons, were not in a position to form an accurate estimate of their nature or value. I cited cases in which farmers had paid large fees for assay and report on their finds, but had been wilfully misinformed on the real nature of the specimens submitted, so that the assayer or his confederates could easily secure the property that the report had purposely depreciated or even condemned.

The result of my persistence was the appointment of a Government Assayer, whose business was to assay and report on samples submitted by Burghers, for which a very small fee was to be charged. The idea was excellent, but before the farmers knew of the institution of such a department the services of the assayer were monopolised by the Government, who utilised them for assaying the illicit gold and amalgam in which the State officials were trafficking. This was proved in the notorious cases of Treu and others, who were arrested for being in illegal possession of amalgam, but were suddenly discharged, and the proceedings quashed by order of the State Attorney. These purchases of amalgam and raw gold were made from the thieves and illicit dealers for Government account and with Government money, presumably to assist in the detection of offenders against the Gold Law, but the proceeds from the subsequent sale of this gold was never credited to the State.

My opportunity came when the unemployed on the Rand were beginning to prove a source of anxiety to the Government. I suggested that

the discovery of an alluvial field would provide a safety valve by giving employment to a large number of men. The President thereupon commissioned me to look round the country for a likely spot. At the same time I pointed out that many farmers would be induced to speak of finds on their properties if they knew they had some sort of guarantee that they were dealing with a representative of the Government instead of Johannesburg speculators, whom they distrusted. I was, therefore, provided with credentials of such a nature as would secure me the confidence of every Burgher, and thus armed began a tour through the Transvaal that occupied six months, and covered some thousands of miles. The expedition added very largely to my knowledge of the mineral resources of the country and their distribution, and the information I obtained was embodied in an exhaustive report for the private information of the Government. The report was, I believe, never even read, except by the unauthorised spies of the Third Raad on the lookout for plunder. Fortunately I had this contingency in view, and took certain precautions, among them being the preparation of a duplicate for my own use, and the suppression of certain facts and information as to locality, which would certainly have been acted upon by individual members of the Government to the prejudice of the community.

The altered conditions that must prevail in the Transvaal after the settlement ought to result,

among other things, in opening up some of the many fields for mineral exploitation that exist all over that practically unexplored area. It is too much to hope that any change may be inaugurated in the stereotyped methods in vogue on the Rand. On the contrary, it is more than probable that the power of the financial houses will be vastly increased, and the gradual absorption of the Rand under the supreme control of a few houses or financial groups, will be continued till one office and one Board of Directors will sway the destinies of the greatest gold-producing area in the world.

It is only when the pegger of a block of claims endeavours to sell them that he realises how small the financial world of the Rand is, yet how potent and far-reaching its influence. Before he has left the office of the first financier to whom he has offered his claims the telephone will have informed the representatives of the other groups of possible purchasers, and terms will have been arranged which the vendor must either accept or reject, for they are final, and prevent his dealing with anyone else. There are only a few buyers of claims on the Rand. Each buys only in his own district, so that if the king of the East Rand declines to purchase a block of claims offered him in that district it would be useless asking any other financier to take them, except at his own price. The Rand is thoroughly absorbed by the capitalists.

There is not a block of claims between the Springs and the Randfontein that is not as well

known as any street in Johannesburg. The financial houses buy when, where, and how they please, and no individual is strong enough to fight the ring. His only chance is to accept humbly such crumbs as the ring may be pleased to give him, or look out for fresh fields over which the shadow of the all-powerful capitalist has not yet been thrown. I am satisfied that future fortunes to be made in the Transvaal outside the Johannesburg ring will be by individuals or small syndicates able to acquire and work their own properties, obtained on terms not rendered unwieldy by watered stock, created for the benefit of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, and by the intervention of the crowd of middlemen who by various methods possess themselves of the lion's share.

For some time to come the prejudice against Englishmen will be so intense among the Transvaal farmers that it would be hopeless for anyone to endeavour to have direct dealings with them, unless he goes well introduced and chaperoned by one of their own people. It is useless to argue, as some people who are not acquainted with the Boer character will do, that money will induce a Boer to change his front. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that the Boer of the outlying districts does not set the value on money that his fellow nearer the towns does. He refuses to see that any favour is conferred upon him by paying him a liberal or even extravagant price for his farm. His objection to parting

with it is genuine, and based on a strong sentimentality that the Uitlander does not understand or give him credit for. To ask an old Boer to part with his farm is to invite him to cut himself off from the associations of a life-time. The fact that he has remained so long on the same spot is the best proof of his attachment to it, and his contentment, for it is easy for a Burgher in the Transvaal to get another farm.

The argument that he can buy another and a better farm does not weigh with him as it might with a commercially minded person. There is only one estate in the whole country to him, and that is the one on which his life has been spent. Therefore sentiment enters so largely into the matter that the pecuniary consideration carries less force than is supposed. It is the purchaser who is placed under an obligation, not the seller, however high or equitable the price paid. The extravagant figure asked in many instances for a farm is fixed with the idea of scaring off an importunate negotiator.

Another frequent and troublesome obstacle in the way of acquiring properties is the system by which a parent bequeaths his farm *en bloc* to the whole of his children, who have equal shares in it. Before the property can be sold or in any way alienated the consent of every co-proprietor must be obtained, and it is no unusual thing to find sixteen or eighteen persons holding a share in a farm. This obstacle had to be faced when I wished to acquire a valuable diamondiferous

property in the Rustenburg district. I had a load of earth taken out of the ground, which yielded three diamonds of from half to four carats each. I opened negotiations for the acquisition of the farm. There were ten joint-owners—children of the original proprietor. Seven of them gave their consent to the sale, two refused—holding out, probably, for a better offer—but the tenth told me that he had all the money he desired—he being a wealthy man—and no sum would tempt him to agree to sell. So a valuable diamond property remains untouched, and will do so till the obdurate plutocrat dies or is induced to yield to the persuasions of a younger wife.

The prospector of the new era will have to travel accompanied by an Afrikaner, one from the Colony or Free State. His presence and tact will ensure a good reception in many cases, for the relationship between Afrikaners is so extensive that it is highly probable that many of the farmers on whom a call is made will prove to be relatives, or at least united to the guide by some form of recognised kinship. At the same time it would be folly not to prepare for such emergencies as will follow on an emphatic refusal to entertain a Rooinek, let his companion be a Boer of the Boers. The visitor should never forget that the *vrouw* is the better half in a Dutch farmhouse, and if a visitor can ingratiate himself with her the conquest of the old man is more than half effected. The shortest cut to the good graces of a Boer mother is through her children. Make

the most of them, regardless of their being obviously children of the soil, and the rest will be found easy of achievement.

The best method of travelling is with an American "spider," and two rough, stout South African ponies. The expedition must be self-supporting in the matter of commissariat, for there are no roadside inns to be relied upon.

Supposing the objective of the traveller be gold, he may safely try any part of the Transvaal save the Rustenburg district, where no indications of the metal have yet been seen. Reefs bearing gold exist all over the country, with the exception named, the only question being their payability. The following hints are based on the notes of my tour, and in every case I have proved the facts stated.

Alluvial is not generally believed to exist on or near the Rand, but I am satisfied that sooner or later a payable field will be discovered there. When at Heidelberg, on this tour, I met an old farmer, who told me that many years before he and a friend were travelling between Pretoria and the place where the Rand Goldfields are now situated. One morning they found in the bed of a river several fine nuggets. Both recognised them as gold, but placed so little value upon the discovery that they expressed their regret that it was not lead, which would have been more useful for making bullets. Some time afterwards I met the other man who had accompanied my informant. He had for years lost sight of his

old-time friend, and it was the mention of his name that revived the story of the finding of the nuggets. He confirmed the story in every detail, which carried the more weight for the reason that the two had had no opportunity since of comparing notes in the interval, for I satisfied myself that when the second man told me the story he had not seen his friend for twenty years—in fact, the friend had been dead over a year.

By far the richest unproclaimed and undeclared reef is situated in the neighbourhood of the town lands of Wakkerstroom. This reef is of immense richness, and is on the property of a well-to-do farmer. Specimens of it in the possession of one or two persons—Boers—who have been let into the secret are equal to anything I have seen at De Kaap. The farmer has refrained from turning it to account out of fear of being worsted in any transaction with professional Johannesburg mining people, and is waiting his time.

A very curious thing happened while I was on the tour, which provided the sequel to a mystery many years old. When I was Mining Commissioner of De Kaap a very respectable old farmer, who had come in to sell vegetables from his farm eighty miles distant, produced a piece of quartz about the size of my two fists. He said it contained copper, and he wished to know if it was valuable.

“If it is,” said he, “there is any amount of it on my farm, for I have traced the reef that this is from four miles.”

I told him I believed the quartz contained gold, and not copper, but promised to have it tested on my next journey to Pretoria.. I did so, and was assured that my suspicions were correct. On testing it by crushing, it yielded two and a-half ounces of gold. I immediately wrote to the farmer, acquainting him with the result, and enclosed two five-pound notes, with instructions to go to the reef and procure other samples, and forward them, adding that if the others proved as good his fortune was made. I heard no more from him, and concluded that the ten pounds had proved of greater value to the farmer than the gold reef. While at a village, a young man came and inquired if I was the same man who had once been Gold Commissioner of De Kaap. On satisfying him on that point, he said his father had been seeking me for years.

"You once sent two five-pound notes to my father," he continued. "That letter got into the hands of my uncle, who had the same initials as my father. He destroyed it, and kept the money. Eight years later, on her death-bed, my grandmother told my father the story, begging him to forgive his brother, and not make it a subject of quarrel. My father, who had never shown the reef to anyone, not even me, went to Barberton in search of you, but was told you were in Europe. He has made a vow never to show the reef to anyone but you, and he wants to see you."

I inquired where the old man was, and learned that he was away on a secret political mission

among the Boers in Natal. As this was just prior to the war, the nature of his mission can be imagined. I am naturally anxious that he should be among the survivors of the campaign.

I saw alluvial signs on the commonage at Heidelberg, but I did not consider the find rich enough to recommend its proclamation as an alluvial field. Gold can be found almost anywhere east of the town. Good alluvial can be found in a straight line between the towns of Pietersburg and Smitsdorp. This is the district in which the German found the rich alluvial deposit, as described in another chapter. On the plateau east and west of Piet Potgieter's Rust there is alluvial in great quantities, but unworkable from want of water. The nearest source of supply is the Nyl River, four or five miles distant, whence it would have to be conveyed before the field could be exploited.

Good pannings resulted from the height above Steynsdorp, on the Swaziland border, and I would strongly advise a thorough prospect of the northern slopes of the Steenkampsburg, near Roos Senekal, in the northern portion of the Middelburg district. This is the locality in which Carl Mauch found asbestos and cinnabar, and both discoveries I verified. In this district is a forbidding and well-nigh inaccessible valley, appropriately named Hell, to which it will not be difficult to get a farmer to direct one. At the bottom will be found evidences of the workings of the ancients. Shafts have been sunk to some

distance, but have long since fallen in. The basin is composed of an ash-like soil, suggesting oxidised lead. On rubbing it between the hands, as if washing, gold will be found adhering to the finger nails, and in the pan will be noticed a yellow film floating on the water. This is formed of grains of gold coated with the oily matter in the soil. The valley is a favourite haunt of panthers and leopards, and a snakes' paradise, while the surrounding country is very sparsely populated.

West of this valley is a large track of ground showing every indication of oil. I had not time to visit it, but the prospector I sent to investigate reported that the soil was an oil shale, and that the ground when fired would burn until extinguished by a shower of rain.

An abundance of mica is to be found here, but I have yet to hear of a specimen in the Transvaal over four inches square. Anything below this size has no practical value. When I returned from England I brought a sample of the mica of commerce. I showed it to President Kruger, and asked him if he knew where I could find anything like it. He advised me to follow the Crocodile River past Rustenburg, when I would come upon a reef or bed of mica in the road at the corner of the mountain. His Honour said his waggon wheel had frequently ripped out sheets from four to six inches broad. I inserted an advertisement in the Dutch papers asking farmers with mica on their properties to

communicate with me. I received over four hundred replies, but none of them came up to the requirements of commerce.

One correspondent—a Dutch Reformed Minister—enclosed his samples in a pill-box! Only once have I seen sheets of mica of fourteen inches, but unfortunately the owners could not, or would not, tell me where it came from. I made several journeys, covering hundreds of miles, inspecting mica beds, but I could not find anything exceeding the minimum of four inches.

Asbestos is to be had for the digging in many spots, but until its value in the market goes up, or the cost of freight goes down, it is not likely to tempt capitalists, so long as gold and copper are obtainable for the same expenditure of capital and effort.

There is a vast quantity of copper in the Transvaal, particularly in the district between Lydenburg, Middelburg, and Pietersburg. Just before the outbreak of the war a friend of mine traced four copper lodes for twenty miles, and wherever assayed the samples gave 68 per cent. of copper. Near Rustenburg a rich reef of the ore was discovered by a farmer, who in the presence of a Johannesburg man melted out a spoonful of copper from the ore by means of an ordinary smith's forge. The man brought in a sample, and submitted it to the assayer of one of the banks at Johannesburg, who reported "no copper," and expressed his opinion that if other samples had yielded the metal they must have

been "salted." The Johannesburger, who was prepared to buy the farm, returned to Rustenburg and reported the result of the assay. The farmer gave him another sample, which when tested by the assayer gave the same result as the first. The farmer was written to, and requested to come to town with more samples. He came, and in the presence of the assayer and others, smelted out copper from the ore by merely roasting it, while the assayer's process gave no result. The owner, fearful of a trick to cheat him, closed the negotiations, and refused to sell.

This story was the subject of comment in the Johannesburg press at the time, and led to a very technical discussion on the qualification of metallurgical experts and the value of their reports.

A farmer in 1887 called my attention to two hills in the neighbourhood of Pietersburg, whence he said the Kaffirs obtained the copper for the manufacture of their ornaments. Their process of extracting the metal was very ingenious. Clay tunnels or tubes were laid from the fire at which the ore was roasted, and air blown through them from a bag made of a whole ox skin, inflated by the lungs of the Kaffirs. I procured a sample of this copper, and had it assayed by Dr. Hahn, of Cape Town. The result showed one and a-half ounces of gold to the ton. The ground on which the ore is found is Government land, and unproclaimed as a goldfield. I went to the President and tried to get possession of the property. His Honour told me he could not sell

it, but if I would locate a suitable spot for a township there, well situated for guarding the roads to the Rhodesian boundary, he would give us—myself and the farmer mentioned—three farms, which would include the copper hills. We went to the district, but it being summer, and the dense growth preventing a proper survey, we had to postpone the matter till winter. In the meantime the farmer died, and more important business distracted my attention from the copper and gold farm.

Another spot where large deposits of copper ore are visible is on the line of the ill-fated Selati-Pietersburg Railway. It was in this district that some friends of mine met with a strange experience. Not liking the look of the bush, they camped on a bare piece of ground. In the morning they were astonished to find that their clothes and blankets had been eaten by some acid, which, though it had not affected their skins, had turned the woollen material into a dry powder. Having no mineralogical or chemical knowledge, they could form no opinion as to the nature of this destructive agent.

Tin exists in many parts of the Transvaal, notably in the districts of Carolina, Amsterdam, and Steynsdorp. It is mainly stream tin, but there is no record of its being found in payable quantities.

The iron ore in the country already located is enormous. The best and most accessible is that in the coal district of Middelburg. It was for a

long time held by a concessionaire, but advantage was never taken of the monopoly, and the concession has expired some time. Bismuth I have found among the alluvial deposits at the Kantoor, and I have several very fine specimens in my collection.

Diamonds I heard of in several districts lying within the zone which geologists seem to agree is an extensive diamondiferous belt running across the country eastward from Kimberley. I have mentioned my attempt to acquire the farm at Rustenburg where I found such promising indications. In this district opals have been found. There are old shafts and other workings, in the debris of which opals have been frequently picked up. A very fine specimen of the lapis lazuli was discovered there, and was in my possession for some time till I presented it to a lapidary in return for his opinion on certain specimens of stones submitted to him.

Perhaps the most novel stone found in the Transvaal is a beautiful black diamond about half an inch long, in which is embedded a small white stone. It was found by a farmer in the neighbourhood of the Warm Baths, at the Waterburg. He was standing in a Schietgat, or rifle pit, from which game is shot, when he noticed the stone on a level with his eyes. It is now in the possession of Mrs. Sarel Celliers, of Pretoria.

Among the less known mineral products that ought to be turned to practical account is a

peculiar red granite found in the Pretoria district. When brought to the surface it is quite plastic, and of the consistency of putty, but after a few hours' exposure to the air it becomes hard, and will take a beautiful polish. There is a practically inexhaustible supply of it. It outcrops on the surface, where of course it is quite hard. In this district, too, are large deposits of a form of silica which the farmers know as "melting stone." When placed on a fire it runs into long glassy streamers which become so hard that no impression can be made upon them with a file, nor is it possible to re-melt them. This product should prove valuable as a natural glaze for earthenware.

While examining a very rich leader on another farm in the Ermelo district the wife of the farmer showed me a plateful of what she described as "pretty stones," which she had picked up on the farm. They comprised agates, white pebbles, and others of the kind usual among indications of diamonds. I noticed one very striking blue stone, and enquired where she had found it. She pointed out the spot, and a very few minutes' search next morning was rewarded by the discovery of a similar stone. I submitted it to a Johannesburg jeweller, who pronounced it a very fine sapphire. The old lady expressed a great desire that I should purchase the farm. This is the only instance in my experience of a Boer pressing a speculator to take over a farm.

A very odd thing happened in connection with this sapphire. I once dropped it in the streets of Durban, and had given it up for lost when I noticed one of the visitors at my hotel exhibiting the stone, which he had picked up in a distant part of the town.

There are many mineral springs in the country which have not been turned to account. One on a farm near Johannesburg possesses remarkable curative properties, the farmer who owns it having relied upon it for physicking his family for many years. I experimented with it, and found it so like Teplitz water that no one to whom I gave it detected the difference.

Among other features of the country that attracted my attention during this trip was the enormous area of land capable of cultivation. In the district of Ermelo particularly are thousands of acres of virgin soil that would produce mealies sufficient to supply every one of the 130,000 bags yearly required at the Rand for feeding the Kaffir employés, and so render the country independent of the American imported article. The Transvaal farmer will never take advantage of his splendid opportunities in this direction, but could easily be persuaded to assist any scheme that would enable him to share the profit without participating in the labours. A fortune awaits the enterprising person or syndicate who will import sufficient steam ploughs to put many thousand acres under cultivation in this district. The land could be hired from the farmer on

sharing terms, the syndicate ploughing and planting the soil, and the farmer taking a certain proportion of the crop as his rental.

There would be an unlimited choice in the selection of the most suitable land for growing mealies, wheat, manna, and all forage crops. The first expense would be practically the last, for these crops require very little attention, certainly no more than the farmer who owned the land could or should be required to give them as part of his share of the labour. The demand for mealies in South Africa alone would justify a syndicate devoting itself solely to their cultivation, and the price they will command will always ensure handsome profits. The lowest average return from an acre of ground mealie sown is twenty bags, and the price ranges from 15s. to 30s. per bag. It should not be forgotten that the war will have reduced the number of cattle previously owned by the farmers very considerably, while the killing off of so many of the men who have hitherto been contributors to the always insufficient labour supply on the farms will result in a great diminution in the number of acres put under cultivation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IF I WERE AUTOCRAT.

I HAVE mentioned that when I asked for my instructions on my appointment as Mining Commissioner of De Kaap Goldfields I was told by the Executive to do whatever I liked so long as I made the place pay. In other words, I was given *carte blanche* to place the Fields on a sound footing as a source of revenue to the Government. I have thought out a rough outline of what I should do were it possible that a similar commission were entrusted to me as Autocrat of the Transvaal; but as there appears no prospect of that dream becoming a reality, I make my programme a present to the British Government as the contribution of an English colonist whose life has been spent in watching the development of South Africa.

My first act would be to dismiss every official save two—the Postmaster-General and the Registrar of Deeds. My reasons for making these two exceptions are not personal, but based on intimate knowledge of the services of these two officials and their more than usual fitness for a continuance of their duties. Mr. Van Alphen, the Postmaster-General, has by his efforts brought the post-office to a state of efficiency that entitles that department to rank in effectiveness with

any other in the civilised world. He is a man who knows no politics and has no object in life outside his office, and the greatest compliment that can be paid to his integrity is the statement that he is, although an official in the inner Pretorian set, still a poor man.

No less praise can justly be bestowed upon Mr. Mans Minaar, the Registrar of Deeds. He has been in this important office since boyhood, and has grown with the system which has made the Land Registration Department of the Transvaal a model for any country. The Registrar is a living encyclopædia of information on the land proprietorship of the country. It is said, and I believe with truth, that there is not a registered farm in the list about which he cannot give all particulars from memory, and certainly no official is more devoted to his work. Like the Postmaster-General, he is a poor man, a fact that speaks volumes for his character in a country where the first duty of a public official is to himself; his second, and last, to his family.

The late Chief Justice, Mr. Koetze, I would immediately reinstate, with instructions and full power to reorganise the entire Bench and the administration of the law. A committee of jurists would decide on such important questions as the retention or rejection of existing rules of procedure. Not the least important matter would be a revision of the official scale of fees, which are outrageously high, probably the highest in any civilised country.

Every Landdrost in the Transvaal I would not only dismiss, but render incapable of holding office again, and for this reason. The Landdrosts as a body, more than any other officials, have been trained in the school of active hostility to the public. They have been the most energetic and influential supporters of Government tyranny and extortion. It is to them that the Executive looked as a source of State income, and the harsh and outrageous manner in which they imposed exorbitant fines for trivial offences has done much to make Transvaal justice a byword and reproach.

Offences, which in the Cape Colony or Natal are atoned for by a fine of 5s., are visited with a penalty of as many pounds by Transvaal Landdrosts, who take full advantage of the liberal discretion that the law allows them in these matters.

It is almost superfluous to say that I would get rid of the ignorant, corrupt bucolics who burlesque policemen in the country. Our guardians should, for some time at least, be imported from the well-trained and intelligently disciplined police forces of London and Dublin. The argument that policemen, coming in contact with the masses so constantly, should be able to speak the Taal is unimportant. The Afrikaner who cannot speak English is the exception—certainly in the towns. Native police I would also abolish. The average man has no conception of the amount of actual cruelty and oppression perpetrated by Kaffirs on their kind. The Kaffir's

instinct is to be brutal, and the authority of his office gives him ample opportunity to wreak vengeance, and pay off old tribal grudges against members of rival clans. The native stands in terror of the white constable, but he fears and suffers much more from his brother black. If the native vote were given on the subject, it would be unanimously in favour of the abolition of the Kaffir policeman.

The question of Field Cornets and their retention is a very important one, requiring careful consideration. The office is the most influential of all in the eyes of the farmer in the outlying districts. From childhood he has been used to regard this official as the embodiment of the law, and with reason, for in many districts he is a veritable Pooh Bah and Lord High Everything. I have known a Boer express his intention of taking a dispute to the High Court, and if he failed to get complete satisfaction there, he had determined to go to the Field Cornet as the final Court of Appeal. The office is a useful and necessary one in the outside districts, so I would retain it, but would considerably circumscribe the power of the Field Cornet, making him correspond more with the same official in the Cape Colony. As an intermediary between the farmers and the Government such an official can be of essential service, for his opinion on matters political carries great weight, and such influence thrown on the side of loyalty to the English Government would have immense effect.

Of course, a representative Parliament and equality for both languages—Dutch and English—are essential. I would have but one Chamber, the advantages supposed to accrue from the dual arrangement being doubtful, and I have never been convinced of the utility of the system in Cape Colony and Natal. Representation must be on the principle of proportion to population. With that fact before us it must be remembered that the population will, for years to come, be shifting; other Rands will arise, other Barbertons decay, and unless the electoral machinery be adjusted to the inevitable fluctuations which will accrue, there will be friction and discontent. The qualification for a place on the voting list should not be exacting, but approximate to that of the Cape Colony, regard being paid to the comparative cheapness of money, which will be a feature of the Rand for some time yet. Every voter should be able to read; writing is less important. There are many Boers who can read, but who can only indicate their signature by a mark.

There should be special representatives in the Assembly for the natives, one for each of the three native districts, and one for the natives on the gold mines. The position of these representatives would not vary from that of their parliamentary colleagues.

The present Gold Law I would retain, with one important amendment, which would be framed to prevent the holding of large blocks of

unworked claims, as is the present practice of the large houses. Apart from this point nearly everyone is agreed that the Gold Law is a piece of legislation as nearly perfect as a practical law can be. It has been in operation seventeen years, and no serious flaw has been discovered. Therefore I may safely claim that my appreciation is not based on the natural affection of an author for his work, but is founded on the approval of others, who may be better judges of its value.

The vexed question of liquor for natives I would solve very speedily. No spirits of any kind should be supplied to a Kaffir, and the penalty of contravening this regulation I would make sufficiently drastic to deter even the members of the Liquor Syndicate dabbling in this nefarious but profitable business. The profits on the native liquor trade are so enormous that a fine has no deterrent effect, while even when imprisonment is enforced proxies have hitherto been easily bought. The law must be so constructed as to punish the actual seller, and also the man behind him, who up to the present has reaped the reward without suffering the risk. This liquor evil must be faced once and for all; otherwise there is but one end—the extirpation of the native. There was more than a mere post-prandial pleasantry in the remark made on the occasion of the opening of the Hatherley Distillery, mentioned elsewhere. It would be sheer waste of time, the repetition of the veriest platitudes, to expatiate on the serious effects

that spirits have already had on the Kaffir. No colonial, nor any man acquainted with the Johannesburg mining industry, will refuse to admit that the liquor curse is the worst the native tribes can suffer under. The trade is a loathsome one; so far it has enriched some of the very lowest specimens of white humanity. Two or three years' rigorous enforcement of a stern and searching liquor law would settle the question once and for ever.

At the same time, I would not prohibit the use of native beer. I am satisfied, as the result of careful investigation, that the native is none the worse for indulgence in this mild stimulant; in fact, he is more contented and works better when he is permitted this beverage in moderation. Of course, there are individual Kaffirs who drink even this to excess, but they are not sufficiently numerous to warrant visiting the punishment of deprivation on the whole race.

The improvement of the condition of the agriculturist of the Transvaal is a matter that would receive my most serious and indefatigable attention, for in it I see the only effective road to final pacification, and the subduing of the race hatred that will for very long be intense. The Transvaal farmer is far behind his brethren in the Cape Colony, the Free State, and Natal. It is a lamentable fact that not one-thousandth part of the country is cultivated. To-day it is absolutely dependent on the neighbouring colonies, and even America, for foodstuffs and forage, and

this despite the overwhelming evidence that the Transvaal alone is capable of producing sufficient of both to supply the whole of South Africa, and leave much more for export. Two examples will suffice to illustrate my point. The Transvaal farmer has never grown vegetables. It is no uncommon thing for him to journey miles to the nearest town to purchase them on the very rare occasions that they form part of his diet. His argument has been, and still is, that it would not pay him to grow them. Yet there are colonies of Italians and Portuguese in the environs of Johannesburg who make the business pay handsomely, and the Johannesburg market is rarely overstocked.

Another fact is this. More than half the forage consumed on the Rand is imported from Cape Colony and the Free State; yet every year the Transvaal farmers burn off sufficient grass to produce hundreds of thousands of tons of excellent hay. As the production of hay would entail a certain amount of labour it is never made; burning the grass is much less troublesome. The long grass that covers the Transvaal veldt makes excellent hay. There is a prosperous German colony at Luneburg, in the Vryheid district, where they make hay of the veldt grass, and my horses were never in better condition than while staying there. These are only two out of many cases I could cite in support of my contention that the Transvaal possesses the necessary conditions to make the cultivation of the soil

profitable. I could describe the criminal neglect in the matter of fruit culture, by which thousands of bushels of peaches are left to rot on the ground beneath the trees every year, not even a pig being kept to fatten on them.

I have calculated what a tax of one farthing per acre on uncultivated land in the Transvaal would bring in. Making every allowance for land kept under grass for the grazing of cattle, the amount so raised would be sufficient to pay the interest on a sum large enough to construct water furrows for irrigating every portion of the country needing them, and supplying and working fifty boring plants for opening up artesian wells.

The imposition of a small tax might also have the effect of breaking up the huge farms that are at once the pride and prejudice of the Transvaal farmer. Six thousand acres—only a few acres short of ten square miles—is too vast an area for one man to turn to anything like profitable account, and if some means could be devised to gradually compel the selling or letting off of large slices, the productive power of the land would be vastly increased, and the farmer and the country benefited accordingly.

This subdividing of large farms may come as a result of necessity. Hundreds of Transvaalers who have for years been residing in the towns as officials will, finding their occupation gone, retire to their farms, or, having none of their own, will buy or hire them. If every inch of the Transvaal were divided into farms, there would be only

12,800 of the size which custom has decreed shall be the regulation dimensions of a bit of grazing ground. It is obvious, therefore, that if every Burgher is to return to pastoral life the old order must change. The Afrikaner will not for some time earn his living in the towns in competition with the Uitlander; therefore he must go back to the soil, or swell the army of the "arme Boeren," or poor whites, the question of whose status will be one of the greatest problems for the solving of future Governments. These poor whites have been fostered and encouraged by the Transvaal Government to an extent unprecedented in any country.

They form an alarmingly large proportion of the population, each town of the Rand having its poor quarter, generally known by the contemptuous name of Veldschoendorp (Veldschoen, a rough boot made and worn by the farmers). The inhabitants of these quarters occupy wretched mud cottages on small plots of land given them by the Government, or let at a nominal rental which is never collected or charged against them. At various times they have had gifts of money, mealies, donkeys, and plots of ground for brickmaking from a short-sighted Government, which has succeeded in pauperising them and confirming their natural habits of sloth and helplessness. This condition of things has lasted a generation, and habits and ideas that have flourished for years are not eradicated in a few months. I see in this subject one

of the most serious difficulties for the new Government.

In this connection my first step as Dictator would be to call up the loans advanced, most of which were on the security of substantial Burghers, or at least of Burghers considered good and sufficient security by the Government at the time they advanced the money. As in every case the guarantors pocketed nearly half of the sum applied for by the borrower, I should have no compunction in pressing them for repayment, for the very good reason that they would soon bring pressure to bear upon their pauper brethren, which would result in compelling a large percentage of them to seek and find means of livelihood in self-defence.

Nor must it be forgotten that the British Government will have a valuable and tangible asset in this loan and the Amortisation Fund which has been in operation several years. The farmers who have benefited by the latter are for the most part hopelessly in arrear with their interest, so that, strictly speaking, some hundreds of farms have already lapsed to the Government, though it is more than probable that the official records of these transactions will have been destroyed with the mass of incriminating documentary evidence in the Pretorian archives. The sole authority on the matter would be Mr. Minaar, the Registrar of Deeds, whose assistance, with that of Mr. Celliers, Secretary of the Amortisation Fund (at

present a prisoner of war, said to be at St. Helena), would be of the greatest value in unravelling the tangled skein. It is more than probable that a new survey of the Transvaal will be necessary, not only to ascertain how much land is the property of the Government, but to accurately apportion much that stands in the names of officials or their nominees. It will also be necessary to scrutinise very carefully transfers of land to Pretorian officials, for I am anticipating that no efforts have been spared by the outgoing Government to secure as much plunder as possible. The antedating of legal documents is not an unknown art in Pretoria nor among the officials in Johannesburg. Such an inquiry would in any event produce some startling revelations of inner Pretoria methods.

In any scheme that the new Government may propound for the distribution of superfluous land among time-expired soldiers or others it will be necessary to guard against that curse of any new country—unproductive and absentee landlordism. Every encouragement should be given to settlement on the land, but none to its transfer from the original grantee; otherwise we shall soon see an old story repeated—farms given out for services rendered sold by the recipients and bought up in huge blocks by speculators who will allow the land to remain idle, even for years, until they can make a profit.

Colonisation by joint stock company has not been a success anywhere yet. The land can

only be made profitable and of benefit to the rest of the country by such individual effort as we have seen in the case of the colonies founded by the German Legion who were granted land in Cape Colony after the Crimean War. They and their descendants are among the most conspicuous successes of the country, and that in spite of drawbacks which do not exist in the Transvaal. Therefore occupation and improvement must be a *sine quâ non* of these gift farms.

The Transvaal is destitute of natural forests, except in the extreme north. I would encourage tree-planting by instituting an Arbor Day, as in Cape Colony, and further remit the tax on farms when a certain number of trees of an approved type have been planted and attained an age of three years.

The care and construction of roads I would throw as much as possible, compatibly with justice, on the farmer. As all the roads in the country are natural, their up-keep need not be expensive. The most important portion of a road is the fifty yards on either bank of the sluits that intersect all farms, which would have to be metalled or strengthened at the cost of the farmer. In a country like the Transvaal, where the ox waggon must for many years be an important, if not the principal, means of transport, it is highly important that the roads be kept in good condition. A good road for oxen need not be hard; in fact, it ought not to be. It is only the difficult places, such as the

descent to and rise from a sluit, or drift, that require special care, and that need not be either troublesome or costly.

A system of narrow gauge railways is necessary to open up many very productive districts. Such lines would cost only about £1,200 per mile, as against the £12,000 which was the extravagant average for the existing lines. The objection that a narrow gauge line is slow is immaterial, since for many years to come time will be of little account with the Transvaal farmer. It is a matter of supreme indifference to him whether it takes eight or sixteen hours to get to market, so long as he gets there easily and cheaply ; and this the narrow gauge railway would accomplish for him. The question of reduced rates for freight would also receive my attention, though this vital step may confidently be left to the consideration of the new Government, which will inaugurate such a reform as a matter of necessity.

My reforms and new institutions would be based on the premiss that agriculture is, and must in a yet larger degree be, the mainstay of the country. After all, the gold industry has its limitations, and the bulk of the inhabitants of the Transvaal must look to the soil as their source of livelihood. Hitherto farming in the country has meant the raising of cattle only. The easy, even lazy, nature of the life has had a peculiar attraction for the Boer, who has magnified the difficulties in the way of cultivating the land

because it has suited his disposition not to cultivate it. But even this phase of farming—cattle rearing—has not been made nearly as much of as might be. Perfunctory methods have prevailed. For example, no attempts worth mentioning have been made to improve the breed of the cattle raised, and the most elementary precautions for the maintenance of the health of the stock have been neglected. Care that entails labour is not understood by the Boer. If his cattle die from cold and exposure it is the fault of the climate, not of himself, and if the worst comes he has always had the consolation of knowing that a paternal Government will lend him money that it never expects to be returned, or find billets for his sons in some department of the State where the pay is good and the duties are *nil*.

Those days, however, have fortunately vanished. Necessity will, of course, not always compel the Boer to exert himself, even under the changed conditions, so he must either be led and gently forced to protect himself against himself by honest labour or sink to the state of abject poverty which will make him a ready tool for the hand of the political agitator—a factor that will have to be reckoned with in the near future as surely as will the case of the poor white.

By way of anticipating the dissemination of political unrest I would at once declare the Bond an illegal organisation. The events of the past

year or two have proved to demonstration that it is a political organisation pure and simple—that its claim to protect the farmer is a mere pretence. So far, its protection has consisted in encouraging the farmers to hate England and everything English, to resist such beneficent measures as the Act for the suppression of scab in sheep, and generally to protect and conserve all that is agreeable to the idle, ignorant, unprogressive farmer.

I am satisfied that the wiping out of this organisation and the spirit it fosters would meet with the approval of all that is intelligent and loyal, not only among the Cape farmers, but among those of the Free State and Natal. Despite what may be said to the contrary, the Cape Colonial is not disloyal. The exhibition of feeble rebelliousness we have recently had is the outcome of an active minority, which under most circumstances can attract to itself more notoriety than a quiescent majority, and thus lead the unthinking to believe it greater and stronger than is really the case. The Boer, whether in the Colony or the Transvaal, has a great deal of the practical in him, and for that reason it is not difficult to convince him that a thing is for his benefit, though this statement may not appear to fit in with the facts revealed by the war, and the ease with which the Transvaal Boer was induced to take a step altogether inimical to his best interests.

My explanation of this seeming contradiction is that he never heard but one side of the

question, and that he was urged with passion by a man of marvellous personality, who knew well how to appeal to the sentiment, weakness, and prejudice of his victims. There will never be a second Paul Kruger. The eyes of the Boers have been opened. They are daily learning how they have been deceived, and used as the tools of a selfish clique in Pretoria: distrust has set in, and they are ripe for enlightenment. The stream having begun to turn, my efforts would be directed towards accelerating its pace. I would show the Boers that the British Government is what it has the reputation of being—a real friend of its people. The prompt enforcement of measures having for their object the advancement of the farming interest would do more than anything to convince the Transvaalers that the new *régime* was the Government of which they stood in need, and the most obstinate prejudice would in time be beaten down.

In the prosecution of this scheme for the killing of race prejudice I would put into practice a project which is the outcome of some years of thought, and my intimate knowledge of the people with whom I have to deal. To reveal my plan in detail would be to rob it of its force and efficacy; therefore I can only say that it is based on my knowledge of how to attack the weakest and most vulnerable point in the Boer character. Other Colonials like myself possessed this secret, if secret it may be called, and it is for the British Government to avail themselves of the

knowledge which these men can place at its disposal, and which they will so place if called upon.

Only a few weeks before the commencement of hostilities I had a striking illustration of my contention that the Transvaal Boer is now ripe for the reception of the other side of the question. While on a farewell visit to an important district, which has hitherto been a Kruger stronghold, I was addressed by a leading Boer, speaking on behalf of some twenty of his fellows. In a touching little speech he assured me that the events of the past few weeks had satisfied him and his fellows that they had all along been deceived by Paul Kruger and the Pretoria clique. So strongly did he feel on this point, that he stated that though he would do his duty as a Burgher and take his rifle, yet in the event of disaster to the Boer cause, he would go to Pretoria, and publicly shoot his brother-in-law, a prominent member of the Executive, who had taken an active part in forcing on the struggle. I am satisfied that he expressed the true feelings of not only those for whom he spoke, but also of a very large majority of the more intelligent Burghers. It is material such as this that has only to be properly worked for it to leaven the whole country.

In the appointment of those officials who would be brought most in contact with the farmers I would prefer the Cape Colonial. Not only is he more in touch with the Transvaal

Boer, speaking his language, and knowing his weaknesses and those little traits which it takes Englishmen years to appreciate, but he is mentally qualified both by superior education and training. His life has been passed under the British flag, his sympathies are British, and in many other respects he is admirably qualified for exercising authority.

It is most important that the Boers be inspired with respect for their officials, not fear, and nothing will keep alive race prejudice more than aggressiveness and want of sympathy on the part of the administrators and representatives of the law. For this reason I should hesitate to appoint Natalians to such posts. Their hostility to the Transvaal Boer is ingrained, and would never be eradicated, and the result would be friction and discontent. It must not be forgotten that competent authorities are agreed that the discontent that eventuated in the Boer War of 1881 was fomented—some say, actually provoked—by the want of tact and overbearing conduct of the English officials in authority, an opinion I believe to be well grounded.

Among other reforms that I would inaugurate is the improvement of the condition of the natives, not by the futile and unpractical efforts of the missionary—who invariably, whatever the religious fervour with which he begins his labours, soon develops into a farmer or store-keeper, profiting by the labour of his “converts”—but by the schoolmaster, whom I would select

from the native students at Lovedale and Zonnebloem colleges. I would increase the hut tax from ten shillings to twenty, reducing or remitting it in the favour of able-bodied natives who could show that they had worked for at least six months in the year.

Another highly necessary act would be to pass a law compelling every farmer in the country to allow travellers to outspan and use the grass and water on the land. It may not be generally known that there are very few public roads in the Transvaal, and as most of the travelling in the country must for years be by waggon or cart it would be the easiest thing for unfriendly farmers to render travelling impossible by exercising their right to forbid passage across their farms. It is impossible to travel in the Transvaal without trespassing on some farmer's property. Every blade of grass by the side of even the public roads is private property, as are the water-springs. The tremendous distances between villages, fifty and even a hundred miles being common, prevent the possibility of the traveller relying upon them. On hundreds of much-traversed roads inns are nearly as rare. It would, therefore, be easy for a number of farmers to league together and close the roads. It must not be forgotten that a Transvaal farm is over three miles across, and many farmers own more than one. Ten or a dozen neighbours could close fifty or more miles of country, for no

horse could travel that distance without frequent halts, and the farmer has the right to refuse grass and water. Until the law opens the roads, and sign-posts are erected, we shall hear of serious quarrels, probably bloodshed, between travellers and obstinate farmers.

CHAPTER XIX.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT THE ORANGE RIVER COLONY.

ALTHOUGH I never lived permanently, nor stayed for any lengthened period, in the Orange Free State, I have, from time to time, done a fair amount of travelling in that fertile country—first in the good old days of that wise and far-seeing President, John Brand; again during the Presidency of Reitz; and, later still, when Steyn was at the helm. Of President Brand it is not for me to speak: his fame is world-wide as a clear-sighted statesman and a great man. It was a sad day for the Free State when Reitz was chosen as his successor: dissension among the different clans of families at once set in, and common interest in the welfare of their country, which had for so many years kept the people together, ceased to exist. Personally, Reitz was not a strong man: he allowed things to drift, was slovenly in his administration as well as in his person, and he selected as his closest friends men who were good *convives*, and who could spin a racy yarn. Had the scales been removed from the people's eyes when the insidious Afrikander Bond was getting a hold on the Government and its leaders; had they but chosen Reitz's opponent

for the Presidency, the Rev. A. Van der Lingen, the Free State would never have been involved in a devastating and purposeless war.

Concerning Steyn's record I can say little that is good. He belonged to the Wessels' family, who were numerous, wealthy, bigoted to the utmost degree, and full of conceit by reason of their broad acres and thousands of cattle. Always putting his own selfish ambition before the welfare of the State, he crowned his treachery to his country by embarking in the recent war. That, at least, is the view which I personally hold of his character and conduct.

The Free State farmer was, in point of civilisation, far in advance of his brother Boer in the Transvaal. He lived in a better class of house, was very hospitable, cleanly in his habits, and did his farming on a fairly up-to-date scale. Nor do we find here that racial hatred towards England and Englishmen so characteristic of the Transvaaler. The Free State farmer lived on the friendliest terms with his English neighbour, and devoted his energies to the cultivation and improvement of his farm, instead of nursing his suspicious and imaginary grievances, as did his compatriot in the Transvaal. Indeed, I must confess to a feeling of deep sorrow and soreness of heart when I reflect on the many fine farms in the Free State laid waste by the necessities of the campaign. With the hospitable owners on many of these farms I have spent pleasant days in the course of my travels through the country. But,

"when I next do ride abroad," I fear I shall miss many a well-known face.

The smaller Republic was, up to recent years, but a very small tract of country, the greater part of what is now known as the Free State being owned by the Basutos. The portion taken from the Basutos, known as the "conquered territory," is exceptionally fertile. The soil is a kind of Karoo ground, and is specially adapted for agriculture. I have known this land to yield splendid crops of wheat, oats, and barley season after season for nine years in succession, without manure or fertiliser of any description. Fruit of all kinds is abundant here, but up to the present little progress has been made in horticulture from want of efficient and safe transport. A great future is before the Orange Colony, particularly that portion lying between De Wetsdorp and Ladybrand, the first thing necessary to the opening up of the country being the establishment of proper railway communication.

Cattle do capitally in all parts, but exceptionally well in the Boshoff district. Horses thrive better in the Harrismith district, but unfortunately little trouble was taken in the breeding of the stock. The wealthy farmer would buy an imported stallion, and simply turn him loose amongst the stock on the farm, night and day, summer and winter; so that a valuable horse, costing hundreds of pounds, was obliged to find his own food and shelter!

In the Free State, as in the Transvaal, the

farms are entirely too large, some of them being nine miles in extent.

Of the mineral resources of the Free State but little is known. In fact, the prospector in search of minerals generally gave the Free State a wide berth, and found his way into the Transvaal via Kimberley and Christiana. Most of the farmers of the Free State, however, journeyed to Kimberley with their produce, and in that way became acquainted with the appearance of the ground and other indications requisite to give them an idea of diamondiferous soil. In this way they have been able to locate a diamond-bearing farm here and there. In their search they are assisted by a small burrowing animal, known as the "Meercat," or Madagascar cat. This little animal burrows down several feet into the ground; the earth it scrapes up is examined by washing, and in this manner most of the Free State "finds" have come about. Gold has been found in the south-eastern portion, but up to the present not in payable quantities. I am, however, of opinion that in its mineral, as well as in its agricultural, properties a great future lies before the country. On one of my journeys by Cape cart I happened to wash my hands in a small stream of almost stagnant water. I observed that the surface was coated with oil, and I noticed a strong smell of paraffin about, so I tracked it somewhat higher up the stream to the side of a small hill, where I found the oil actually dripping from the shale. I interviewed the owner

of the farm, and he showed me a lamp in which he had burned the oil; but he said it smelt so badly that it was almost useless; and, besides, that it was a nuisance on his farm, as his cattle would not drink the water from that stream. This conversation took place only a few weeks before war was declared.

Near Wepener is a vast deposit of nitrates. The seam is about eight feet thick, and can be traced for miles along the top of a mountain. In this district I was also shown good samples of cinnabar, supposed to have come from a reef not very far from the town. Near De Wetsdorp I found antimony in large quantities and highly payable. The farmer who showed it to me said it was lead, rich in silver. I took a sample with me, and had it assayed in Johannesburg. The assayer pronounced it zinc, but a subsequent assaying in London of the same sample leaves not a particle of doubt that it was genuine antimony. In a previous chapter I have given an instance of a copper assay made in Johannesburg. These, and similar cases of erroneous assaying, would go to show that there is an opening for a competent assayer in Johannesburg. Indeed, it is only reasonable to suppose that many a valuable find has been lost to the prospector through the incompetence of the assayers employed.

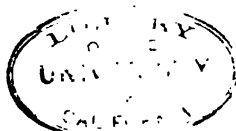
Another discovery I made may one day be turned to good account, and that is a deposit of sulphur cropping up here and there over a great

extent of land around Springfontein, at the junction of the East London and Cape lines of railways. Springfontein is, I believe, acknowledged to be the healthiest part of the Free State, and it is said that poultry thrives better here than in any other part of South Africa. I have always thought it a pity that the capital of the Free State was not at Springfontein instead of Bloemfontein, which is a dry, stony, uninviting spot—in a word, a fever nest. Bloemfontein in winter is a fine place to be out of. The only other minerals I found in the Free State besides coal were lithographic stone and cobalt.

Probably many of my readers have heard of the "Kolla Mine," or King's Diamond Mine. It is a large diamond mine in Basutoland—larger than the Kimberley mine, and extraordinarily rich. According to the decrees of former native kings, the minerals and precious stones of this mine are never to be worked: no one was allowed to approach this precious ground, and the penalty for picking up a diamond was death. Large offers have recently been made to King Lorothoni, but no figure will tempt him. His brother-in-law told me not long since that the mine is strongly guarded, but that even from without the pale one can see large diamonds lying on the ground. The tales I have heard from time to time about this mine are almost incredible, even in this land of wonders. However, it is a pity that something cannot be done to place this vast treasure within the reach

of civilised mankind. Of course the owners of Kimberley are strongly opposed to such a step.

In conclusion, I have only to repeat that the Orange River Colony is a beautiful country—picturesque and fruitful—that it has an ideal climate, entirely adapted to the European constitution, and that its proper management by its new owners, on a broad-minded and progressive policy, will make it one of the most prosperous colonies under the British flag.



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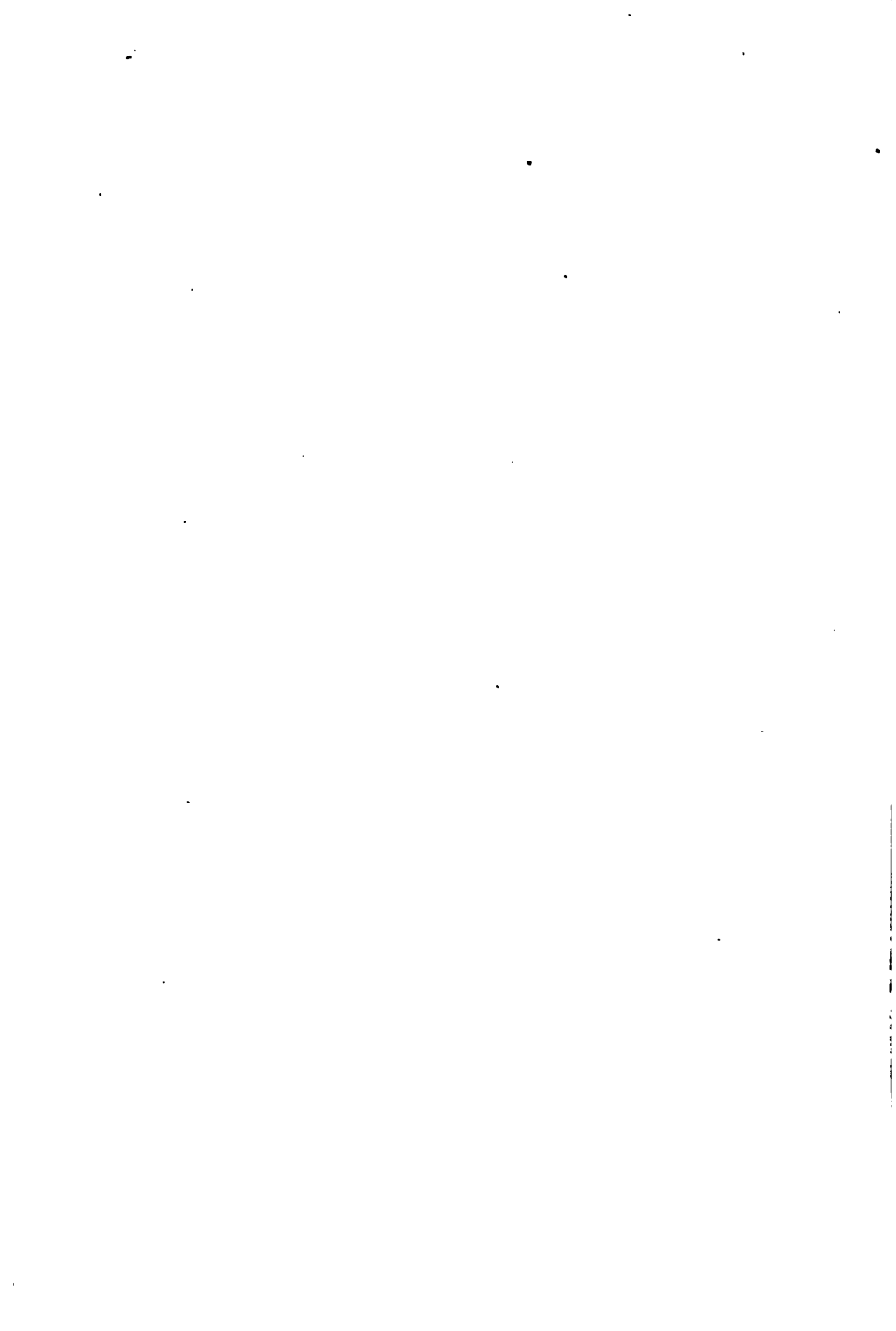
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